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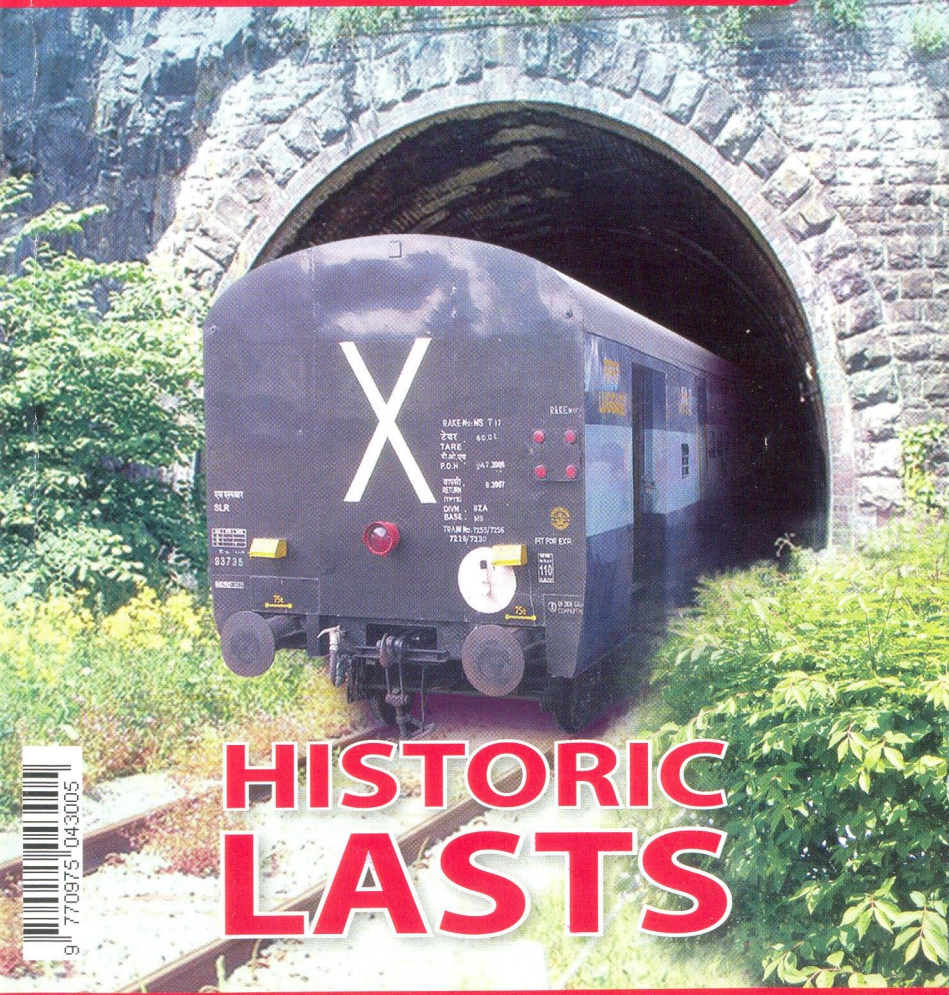

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TELL ME WHY

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One Flew Over the Dodo's Nest!

Beginnings always make history, as we all know. In every field of life, the position of 'the first,' is hallowed.

But just like beginnings, some endings too, have great historic value. Time has given an ever permanent throne only to the first, it never changes. Be it the first aircraft, the first steam engine, the first man in space, or anything else. But things are different in the case of lasts. The record of being the last may change with time. In our modern world, a dodo bird or a mammoth might still be born again, recreated from fossil remains, thanks to advances in science. So we have to add the tag 'till date,' to some of the lasts.

Sometimes, it's the ending that gives more relief, than the beginning. An example is World War II. The feeling that the war had finally ended made the world happier than the victory of the Allies. In some cases, the first itself becomes the last. Do you remember the tragic story of luxury liner Titanic? It's very first journey became its last one too. This issue of Tell Me Why tells about some of the remarkable endings that left their mark on history.

FROM THE HOUSE OF MAGIC POT, MANORAMA YEAR BOOK, VANITHA, THE WEEK AND THE MALAYALA MANORAMA DAILY

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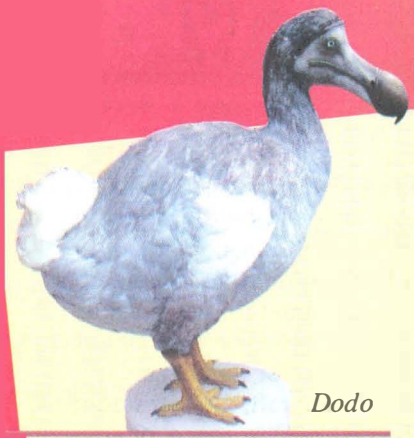
FAMOUS LAST ONES



Dodo

Why did the dodo become extinct?

In the year 1507 AD, Portuguese sailors landing on the shores of the island of Mauritius discovered a strange looking bird. It was large and stubby, and could not fly. It had a hooked black beak, short yellow legs, grey-blue plumage, and a tuft of pale coloured feathers for its tail. Since this bird had never seen humans before, it was very friendly and trusting. In fact, the sailors mistook its gentle nature for stupidity, and called it 'dodo,' which meant simpleton in Portuguese.

The dodo was an easy source of fresh meat for the Portuguese- and later, the Dutch who came to the island in 1598- because it could be easily captured due to its friendliness. Dodos were killed in large numbers by the new inhabitants of the island. Those that survived Man had to face new enemies like dogs and pigs that were introduced by these inhabitants. The dodo had no natural enemies on the island, but these new animals, together with Man, hastened its extinction. By the year 1681, the last dodo had died, and today, the term 'as dead as a dodo,' means something that has disappeared entirely from the face of the Earth.

)odo Tree

STARFACT

'he extinc-ion of the lodo al-nost led to he extinc-ion of yet another species, a certain :ype of tree in Mauritius, which was known as the dodo tree. The seeds of this tree could only ger-minate after passing through the digestive tract of the dodo. When :he dodo became ex-:inct, no new trees grew on the island. However, :he tree was saved from extinction when bota-nists fed its seeds to tur-keys. The seeds passed through the turkeys' di-gestive system, and were propagated in the same way as when do-dos were alive.

Seeds of Dodo Tree

What do you know about passenger pigeons and Arabian ostriches?

The passenger pigeon was once probably the most numerous among birds on the planet. It was found in the vast forests that covered North America, east of the Rocky Mountains. Flocks of passenger pigeons were huge- often one and a half kilometres wide and upto 482 kilometres long. Passenger pigeons became extinct because their immense roosting and nesting colonies invited over-hunting. The last reported sighting of a flock was in 1896.

The Arabian ostrich once lived in the Arabian Peninsula, and in the Near East. Ostrich hunting was a popular pastime of the rich. So, the Arabian ostrich became very rare. The last confirmed specimen was shot in 1941.

Passenger Pigeon

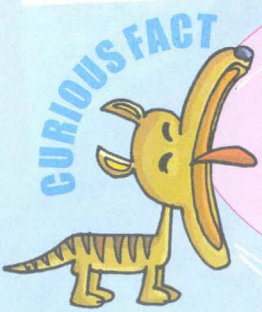
Why did the Tasmanian tiger become extinct?

The Tasmanian tiger is one of the most fabled animals in the world. European settlers in Tasmania were puzzled by it, feared it, and killed it when they could. After only a century of white settlement, the animal had been pushed to the brink of extinction.

The Tasmanian tiger looked like a large, long dog, with stripes, a heavy stiff tail, and a big head resembling that of a wolf. That is why it is sometimes called the Tasmanian wolf. It was shy and secretive, and always avoided contact with humans. It was a meat-eater. When the Europeans began settling in Tasmania, the animal started killing the sheep and poultry raised by the settlers.

As a result, Tasmanian tigers were hunted down relentlessly, and rewards were given to those who killed them.

Another major factor that contributed to the Tasmanian tiger's decline is the dingo, or wild dog population. These wild dogs



A Chance for Rebirth

Although the Tasmanian tiger has been officially declared to be extinct, there have been unconfirmed reports of it being sighted. However, there is no hard evidence that the animal still exists. Efforts are being made to clone a specimen that has been preserved in alcohol. A team of Australian scientists has succeeded in replicating the DNA of the extinct Tasmanian tiger, and plan on reviving the species soon.

Tasmanian Tiger

hunted in packs, unlike Tasmanian tigers which hunted in small numbers or alone. Dingoes competed with these Tasmanian tigers for food and shelter. Climate changes anddeforestationarealso believed to have been contributing factors to their extinction. By 1936, the last captive Tasmanian tiger had died.

Tasmanian Tigers - An Illustration

Why were the Ancient Olympics banned?

The Olympics began nearly 3000 years ago in Olympia, in Southwest Greece as a religious festival. The Greek Olympics are thought to have begun in 776 BC, and were held every four years in honour of the God Zeus. The Olympics became so important, that wars were stopped when they were held, and a truce was declared for the duration of the Games! The Ancient Olympics continued for over a thousand years without interruption.

The Ancient Olympics started to lose their importance when the Romans started to take over Greece in the second century BC. The last of the Ancient Olympics was held in 393 AD, and in 394 AD, the Roman Emperor Theodosius I abolished the games.

Zeus

Gladiatorial Combat

Women Gladiators

Women also fought as gladiators. A woman gladiator was called a 'gladiatrix. Matches between female slaves gained popularity over the years. The last fight between two gladiatrix was in 200 AD, after which, the Emperor Septimus Severus banned women from fighting as gladiators.

Why did gladiatorial games decline?

Gladiatorial games were first introduced to Rome in 264 BC, when the sons of Junius Brutus honoured their father at his funeral by forcing three pairs of gladiators to fight to death against one another. Gladiatorial combat was originally part of a religious ceremony.

However, as the years passed, the ritual lost much of its religious significance, and became Rome's most popular spectator sport. Gladiators were generally condemned criminals, prisoners of war or slaves bought for this purpose, and were forced to fight to death, for the amusement of spectators.

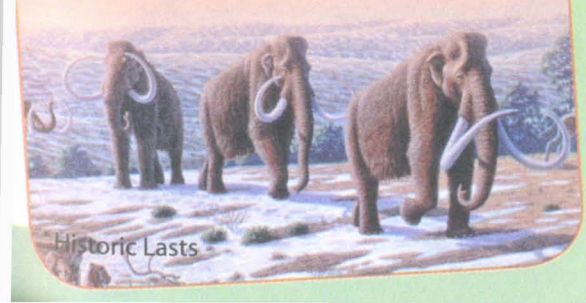
Chariot Racing

The gladiatorial games of ancient Rome began their decline during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine I. In 325 AD, Emperor Constantine declared the games illegal in Rome. However, the fights continued in one form or the other until they were finally abolished. They were banned in 404 AD by the Emperor Honorius, when a Christian monk jumped into the arena to separate two gladiators, and was stoned to death by the crowd for spoiling their fun!

Extinct!

Many species of animals have become extinct. The mammoth, the auroch - a species of wild ox, the Steller's sea cow, the Quagga, the Caucasian Wisnet, the Javan Tiger etc are only some of them.

Mammoths



Women in the Ancient Olympics

Women were not allowed to take part in the Olympic Games, or to attend them. Any women caught sneaking in were severely punished! Women could own horses in the chariot race though. If their chariot won, they could claim the wreath of olive leaves that was the prize, because the prize was not given to the driver of the chariot, but to the owner.

'Lasts' in the Ancient Olympics

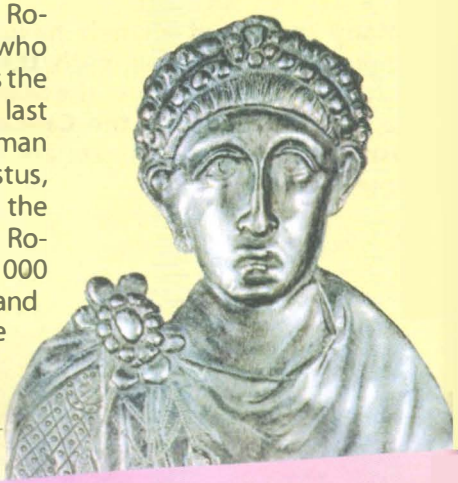
The last time the Olympics consisted of a single event was in 728 BC. The last time that the Olympics lasted for just a day was in 692 BC. The last Olympian to have his name recorded in the Ancient Olympics was Varazdates of Armenia in 385 AD.

Why is it not easy to name the last Roman Emperor?

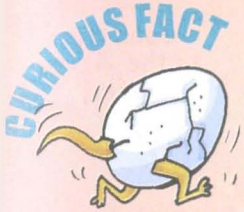
It is not easy to name the last Roman Emperor, because when the Roman Empire grew too big to be easily administered, it was divided into the Western Roman Empire and, the Eastern Roman Empire. However, some successors did not like this arrangement, and the Empire was reunited by different rulers over the next 100 years.

The last ruler of the united Roman Empire was Theodosius I who was also known as Theodosius the Great. He died in 395 AD. The last Emperor of the Western Roman Empire was Romulus Augustus, who was forced to abdicate the throne in 476 AD. The Eastern Roman Empire lasted another 1000 years, but it became smaller and smaller, and was known as the Byzantine Empire. The last emperor of the East was Constantine XI Palaeologus, who was killed in 1453.

However, Charles the Great, King of the Franks, revived the Holy Roman Empire in 800 AD, and the last Holy Roman Emperor was Francis II. He was overthrown in 1806 by Napoleon, who also abolished the Holy Roman Empire.



Theodosius I



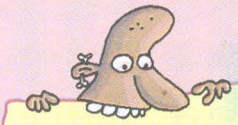
Wedding Ring

Do you know why the wedding ring is worn by some people on the third finger of the left hand? The custom can be traced to the Ancient Romans who believed that there was a nerve leading directly to the heart from the third finger of either hand.

Why is the fall of Constantinople significant?

The Eastern Roman Emperor Constantine built a new capital for his empire on the Peninsula between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea in 330 AD, and he named the city after himself. Although the Eastern Roman Empire gradually broke up, the city of Constantinople itself thrived because of its strategic location. However, by the 15th Century, the Turks had built up the mighty Ottoman Empire, which surrounded Constantinople. The ruler of the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Mehmet II laid siege to Constantinople in 1453, and did not allow any supplies to reach the city. The siege lasted for six weeks, and finally on 29th May 1453, Constantinople fell. The city was sacked and plundered of its priceless treasure. The Roman Empire finally came to an end. This also marked the end of the Middle Ages in Europe.

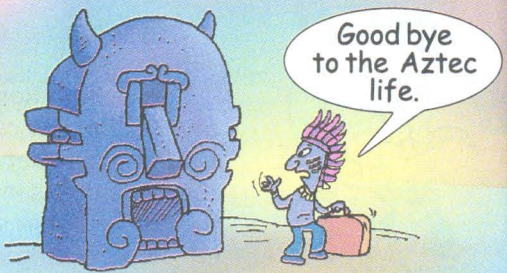
Restored section of the fortification that protected Constantinople



The Last Steam Powered Flight

Did you know that in 1890, Clement Ader, a Frenchman, made a monoplane called Eole, that was powered by steam? The aircraft did take off, and managed to make a very short flight at a very low altitude. In 1933, William Besler and his brother flew the Travel Air 2000 using steam.

Ader's Steam Aircraft



Why did the Aztec Empire decline?

The Aztec Empire goes back approximately to the fourteenth century, and covered what is now known as Mexico. The empire expanded rapidly, and by the early 16th century, it stretched from the Pacific Ocean in the West, to the Atlantic Ocean in the East. The Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, was a splendid complex of cities, lakes, and canals. When the Spanish explorers, under Cortez, arrived in 1519, they were first welcomed by the Aztecs. By 1521, the people ruled by the Aztecs were tired of the heavy taxes they had to pay, and the harshness of their rulers. So, they joined forces with the Spanish explorers and attacked the Aztec capital. Tenochtitlan was razed to the ground, and the empire fell. In 1535, Mexico officially came under Spanish rule.

Aztec Pyramid

Why did the Inca Empire fall?

At first, the Incas were simply a small tribe that lived in the city of Cuzo. Around 1430 AD, a neighbouring tribe attacked the Incas. The Incas won, and that was the beginning of the Inca Empire. At the height of its power, the Inca Empire was 4023 kilometres long, 804 kilometres wide, and home to 12 million people. These people called themselves 'the Children of the Sun'.

This mighty empire lasted only around 100 years. It fell because of many reasons. The first was an epidemic of smallpox that was brought to their world by early visitors from Europe – mainly the Spanish. There was also a civil war that greatly weakened the power of the Incas. Finally, Spanish invaders came to the region, hunting for gold and the legendary riches of the Incas. The invaders, led by Francisco Pizarro, conquered the Incas after a series of fierce battles. Manco Inca II was murdered by the Spanish in 1544 and Tupac Amaru the last emperor met a similar fate in 1572. The descendants of the Incas still live in the modern day country of Peru.

Francisco Pizarro and his followers

Who was the last French monarch?

Louis XVI was king of France when the monarchy was overthrown. His reign was marked by the outbreak of the French Revolution. In 1774, Louis XVI inherited a kingdom that was in grave difficulty. He was sent to the guillotine

Napoleon III

Louis XVI

and beheaded in 1793, and this marked the end of the French monarchy, and the establishment of the First French Republic.

The First Republic lasted only 12 years, before Napoleon crowned himself Emperor of France. He was forced to abdicate, and the monarchy was restored with Louis XVIII as king. It survived till 1848, when the Second Republic came into existence. The Second

Cigarette Advertisement

We all know that cigarette smoking is injurious to our health, and for this reason, cigarette advertisements are banned on television. The last cigarette ad on television appeared on July 31st 1965, in Britain and on December 31st 1970, in the USA.

Republic lasted only four years, before Louis, Napoleon's nephew, proclaimed himself the Emperor. He was ousted in 1870. This led to the establishment of the Third Republic.

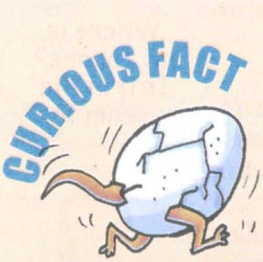
Why will Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, be remembered?

Nicholas II will be remembered not because he was a great ruler, but because he was the last Tsar of Russia. The rulers of Russia were known as tsars, and Nicholas was the eldest son of Tsar Alexander III. He succeeded his father in 1894.

Nicholas encouraged Russian expansion in Manchuria. This provoked war with Japan in 1904. The resulting Russian defeat led to riots. Nicholas was forced to grant a constitution and establish a parliament, the Duma. During World War I, Nicholas was away from Russia a lot. Russia suffered heavy losses in the war.

In 1917, widespread popular demonstrations began in the capital. Nicholas lost the support of the army, and had to give up his throne. A shaky provisional government was established which was overthrown in October 1917 by the Bolsheviks. On 17th July 1918, Nicholas and his family were executed, and the rule of the Tsars in Russia was over.

Nicholas II



King Alexander

Last Monarch to be killed by a Monkey

On October 25th, 1920, King Alexander of Greece was bitten by a monkey. In one version of the incident, the monkey was his pet. In another, the 27-year-old monarch actually died after defending his pet dog from an attack by monkeys during a walk. He suffered an infection, and died from sepsis, to go down in history as the last monarch to have died from a monkey bite!

Why was the Ford Model T a remarkable car?

The Model T was a very important car in American history. It was launched on October 1st 1908, by Henry Ford, who had

When did the last steam engine run?

In 1804 the first steam-powered engine, carrying some iron, ran in Wales, in Britain. But it was almost twenty five years later, in 1829, that George Stephenson, a British engineer, designed the 'Rocket' – a steam engine that created history. Trials were held by the Liverpool and

George Stephenson

Model T car

pledged that he would build a car that was cheap enough for anyone with a reasonable salary to buy.

Henry Ford kept his promise, and the Model T was mostly made out of wooden parts, and had a 4 cylinder engine. It was produced by the Ford Motor Company from 1909 through 1927. Mass production kept the price reasonable, and sales zoomed. The car was so popular that the Ford Motor Company sold over 15,007,003 Model Ts. On May 26th 1927, Ford and his son Edsel drove the 15 millionth Model T Ford out of their factory, marking the famous automobile's official last day of production.

Manchester Railway Company, to find the best locomotive engine for a railway line that was being built to serve these two English cities. On the day of the trials, some 15,000 people came along to see the race of the locomotives. During the race, the Rocket reached speeds of 24 mph during the 20 laps of the course. This was due to several new design features. The Rocket paved the way for steam locomotives all over Europe, Asia, and America.

The era of steam engines is often called the 'golden age,' of railways. Gradually though, steam engines were replaced by diesel and electric locomotives. The beginning of the end for steam engines began in the 1950's. America's last steam engine ran in 1958, while the last steam engine in Britain was retired from use in 1968.

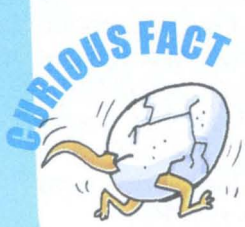
Last Steam Powered Land Speed Records

The last steam powered land speed record was set on 23rd January 1906, at Dayton beach in the USA, when Fred Marriot, an American, reached an amazing 127.659 mph in his steam powered car.

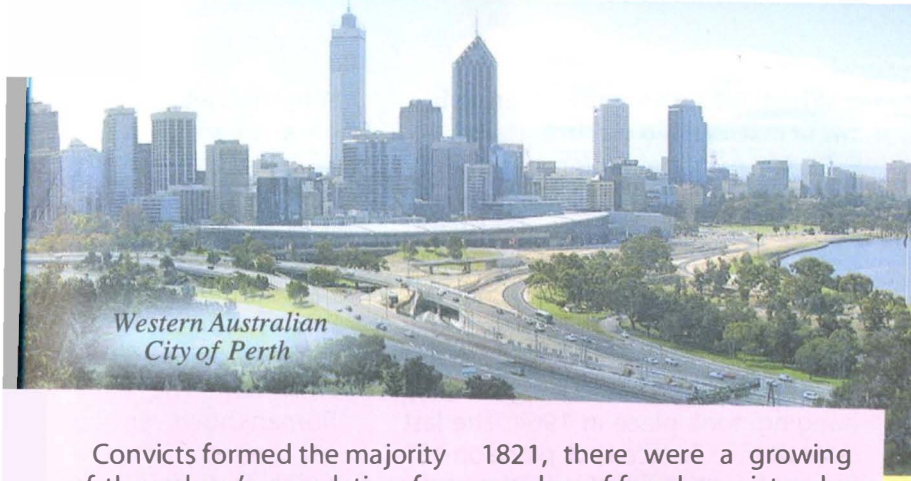
Why is Western Australia considered the last penal colony of Britain?

Do you know what a penal colony is? It is a settlement of prisoners who have been exiled from their homeland as a punishment, and transported to a far away location. Britain started sending convicts to America from 1597 onwards. The practice was stopped in 1776, with the American War of Independence. British prisoners were sent to Western Australia instead, and new penal colonies were established there. Twenty per cent of these first convicts were women. A system of labour was established in which people, whatever their crime, were employed according to their skills - as brick makers, carpenters, nurses, servants, cattlemen, shepherds, and farmers. Educated convicts were set to the relatively easy work of record-keeping for the convict administration.

Faces on a Mountain



Gutzon Borglum and a team of workers built a monument at Mount Rushmore, carving out the faces of four Presidents of the USA, on the side of a mountain. For fourteen years, the men toiled. They created a sculpture unlike any other that marked the last time faces were carved out of a mountain! The four presidents, whose faces were carved on Mount Rushmore, were Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson.



Western Australian City of Perth

Convicts formed the majority of the colony's population for the first few decades, and by 1821, there were a growing number of freed convicts who were appointed to positions of trust and responsibility as well as being granted land. Meanwhile, public opinion in Britain was against the establishment of penal colonies, and the practice was abolished in 1860. The last convict ships left Britain in 1867, and arrived at their destination in 1868, 80 years after the arrival of the first convicts in Western Australia.

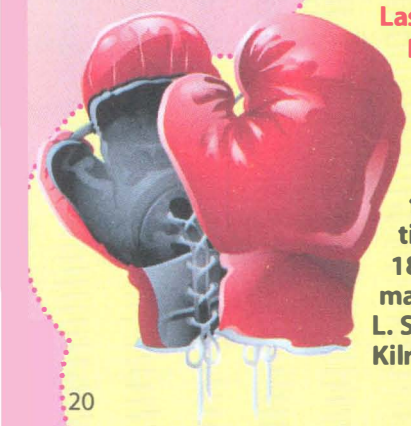
Mount Rushmore

When was the capital punishment last carried out in Britain?

Capital punishment is punishment by death. In the past, those who were convicted of capital punishment were beheaded, shot, or hanged. Capital punishment has been abolished in many countries, but the practice still continues in many others. The last executions in the United Kingdom, by hanging, took place in 1964. The last execution in France took place on 10th September 1977, and the death penalty was abolished in France in 2007. In East Germany, the last execution took place in 1981 when a traitor was shot dead. West Germany abolished capital punishment altogether in 1951, and the last execution there was in 1949. The United States and India are two of the nations that have not yet abolished the death penalty.

Why is there confusion as to which is the last day of the week?

The concept of a seven day week comes from the Jewish belief that God created the universe in six days, and rested on the seventh day. The early Romans however, had no concept of the week. They simply divided the year into months, and the months into working, and non-working days. It was the Emperor Constantine, a Christian,

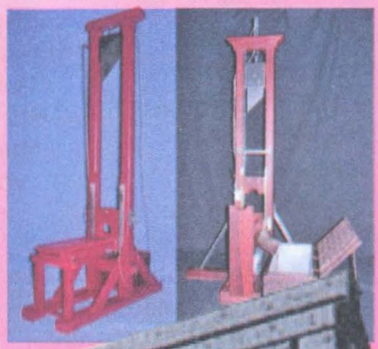


Last Bare Knuckle Boxing Match

Today, boxers wear gloves when they fight. But it was not always so, and early boxing matches were fought with bare knuckles. The practice was gradually discarded, and in 1889, the last bare knuckle boxing match was fought. In this match, John L. Sullivan was the winner against Jake Kilrain.

who declared that there should be a seven day week, and the day of rest was called Dies Dominica, from which the French name 'dimanche' for Sunday is derived.

In modern times, there is some confusion as to whether Sunday is the first day of the week, or the last. This is because many diaries and calendars are printed with Sunday as the first day, and many with it as the last. Some dictionaries also define Sunday as 'the first day of the week'. Actually, when you think of it, it doesn't really matter, because weeks are continuous, and one week just leads to another!



Death by Guillotine

Hamida Djandoubi has the dubious honour of being the last person to be sent to the guillotine in France. The Tunisian immigrant was beheaded in Marseilles for killing his girlfriend.

Guillotine

STARFACT

Beginning and End of the Day

It is generally accepted that a day begins and ends at midnight. But did you know that in some religious calendars, the day begins at sunrise and ends at sunset?

Why are the last days of Pompeii significant?

Pompeii was a large and prosperous city in Ancient Rome. It was located in the Bay of Naples, at the foot of the volcano, Mount Vesuvius. It was the biggest of three cities- the other two

How did 'z' become the last letter of the alphabet?

The ancient Phoenicians had an arrow-like symbol in their alphabet. It was the seventh letter, and called 'zayin'. The ancient Greeks adopted this symbol from the Phoenicians as the sixth letter of their alphabet in 8000 BC. They called it 'zeta,' and gave it its present form. The Romans adopted it from the Greek alphabet in 100 AD, and Z is the last letter of the Roman alphabet to this day. 'Z' is pronounced as 'zed' by the British and as 'zee' in America. If you are sending a Morse code, you will have to send two dashes and two dots to represent 'Z'! Another interesting fact about 'Z' is that it was used to represent the Roman number 2000 in medieval times.

HISTORIC LAST DAYS

were the neighbouring cities of Herculaneum and Stabiae- that were completely destroyed by the mighty eruption of Vesuvius on 24th August 79 AD. The Roman writer Pliny the Younger has given an eyewitness account of the disaster that gives us a clear picture of every horrific detail during Pompeii's last days.

The first explosion created a thick cloud of dark ash, which was followed by a flood of hot ash, cinders, and poisonous fumes over the next two days. The ash completely buried and sealed off the cities of both Pompeii and Stabiae. Bodies were perfectly preserved by the hot ash, so that they remained exactly as they were, even to their facial expressions, at the moment of death. Herculaneum was buried under a stream of boiling mud and lava, and was preserved in perfect detail too.

The ruins of Pompeii were discovered only in 1749.

Mount Vesuvius

Longest Alphabet

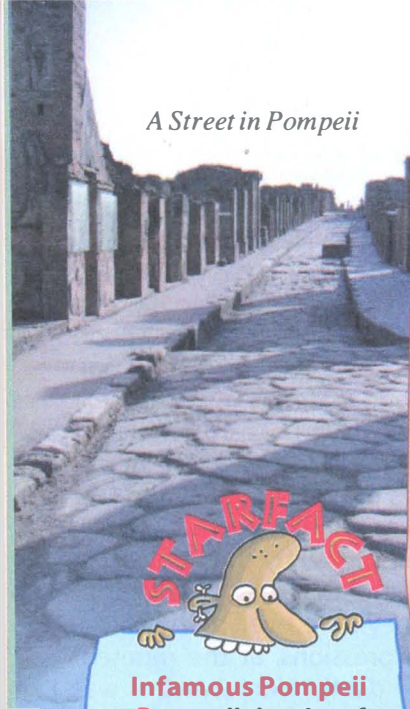
The Cambodian alphabet is the longest in the world. It has 74 letters. Aren't you glad you don't have to learn it? The shortest alphabet is that of Rotokas, the language of the Solomon Islands. It has just 11 letters!

A Street in Pompeii

When did slavery end?

Between 1450 and the late 1800's, it is estimated that between 10 and15 million Africans were kidnapped, and sold into slavery. The slave trade was incredibly profitable, but very cruel too. For over 300 years, slaves were captured along the west coast of Africa, often with the active help of African kings and merchants. Slaves were traded for beads, textiles, brandy, horses, and guns. Slavery was illegal in the United States after the Civil War, but slaves continued to be traded in Central and South America for another 40 years, until finally slavery was declared illegal in Central and South America as well.

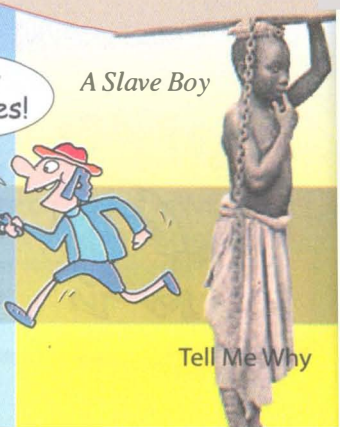
Slavery existed not only in America, but in other parts of the world as well. Denmark was the first European country to abolish slav-



Infamous Pompeii

Pompeii is also famous in another way- for sports hooliganism. It has been recorded that in the first century, a battle broke out in Pompeii between the home sports fans and those of a neighbouring town during a gladiatorial contest.

A Slave Boy



ery in 1804, while Britain abolished slavery in March 1907. In the United States, slavery was one of the main issues in the Civil War between the North and the South. The last day of legal slavery in the USA was 31st January, 1865, while the worldwide abolishment of slavery took place only in 1926.

Which was the last day of the British Raj in India?

The British ruled India for over 100 years, and this period is known as the days of the British Raj. Under British rule, a strong Indian Nationalist Movement developed, that was led by Gandhiji. His famous campaign of non violence and civil disobedience finally succeeded in ending the British Raj and winning independence for India.

The British Raj formally ended on midnight, August 14th 1947. A conch shell was blown to herald freedom, and to mark the opening of the new Indian Constituent Assembly. Each member swore allegiance to independent India. Nehru's Independence Day speech stirred every Indian's heart as he uttered the now famous words 'At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom'.

Nehru Speaks to an Independent India

End of the Inquisition

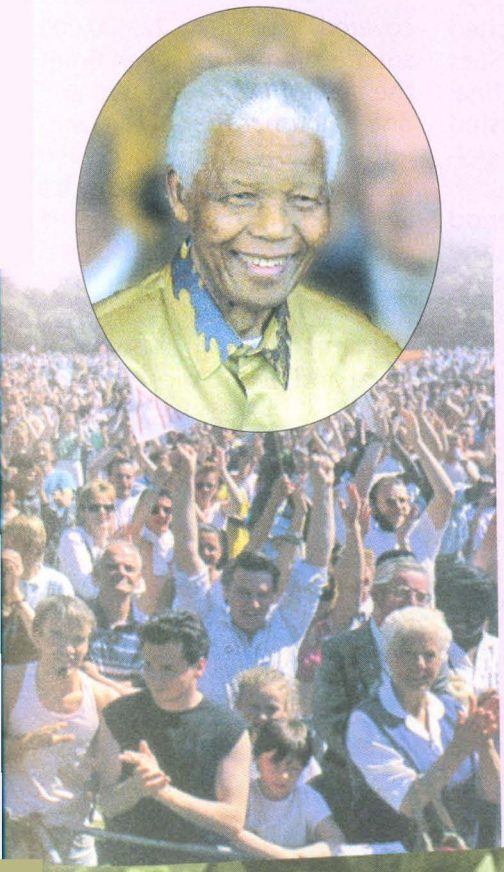
Around 1232 AD, the Church started a new program called The Inquisition. The Inquisition was a court that was supposed to seek out and punish people suspected of not obeying the church. Punishment was quite severe, and people were often tortured cruelly to make them confess. Punishment ranged from loss of property, to imprisonment, and death. The Inquisition was finally ended in 1772 in France, 1821 in Portugal, and on 15th July 1834 in Spain.

Why was the inhuman policy of apartheid given up?

Apartheid is the name given to the policy that was followed in South Africa from 1948 to 1990. The word actually means 'separate' or 'apart' and it refers to the white government's policy of discrimination – racial, political, and economic – against the country's non white majority. The purpose of apartheid was separation of the races.

Under apartheid, the white population, which was the minority, controlled the country. They determined where a person might live, go to school, and what jobs a person may hold.

Nelson Mandela

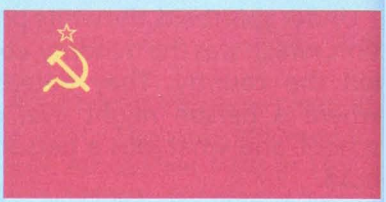


Apartheid was an inhuman policy, and came for widespread criticism both at home, and abroad. Nelson Mandela led the movement against apartheid in South Africa, and he was supported by most world leaders. The apartheid system began to fall apart in the 1980's. Two million unemployed blacks, a shrinking white minority, continued black resistance, and international sanctions forced the South African government to end the policy. Apartheid officially ended in South Africa on 22nd December 1993. Nelson Mandela led the African National Congress, which had been outlawed since 1960, to victory in South Africa's first free elections, and became the president of South Africa on April 26th, 1994.

An Anti Apartheid Rally in South Africa

Which was the last day of the Soviet Union?

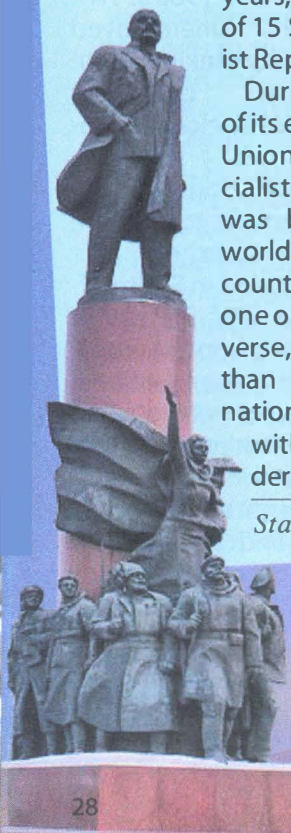
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the USSR, or Soviet Union was the successor to the Russian Empire of the tsars. It came into existence in 1922, and stretched from the Baltic and Black Seas to the Pacific Ocean. In its final years, it consisted of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics.



Flag of the USSR

During the period of its existence, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was by area, the world's largest country. It was also one of the most diverse, with more than 100 distinct nationalities living within its borders. The U.S.S.R. covered some 22,400,000 square kilometres, seven times the area of India, and two and one-half times that of the United States. The country occupied nearly one-sixth of the Earth's land surface, including the eastern half of Europe, and roughly the northern third of Asia.

Dramatic changes, both political and economic, occurred



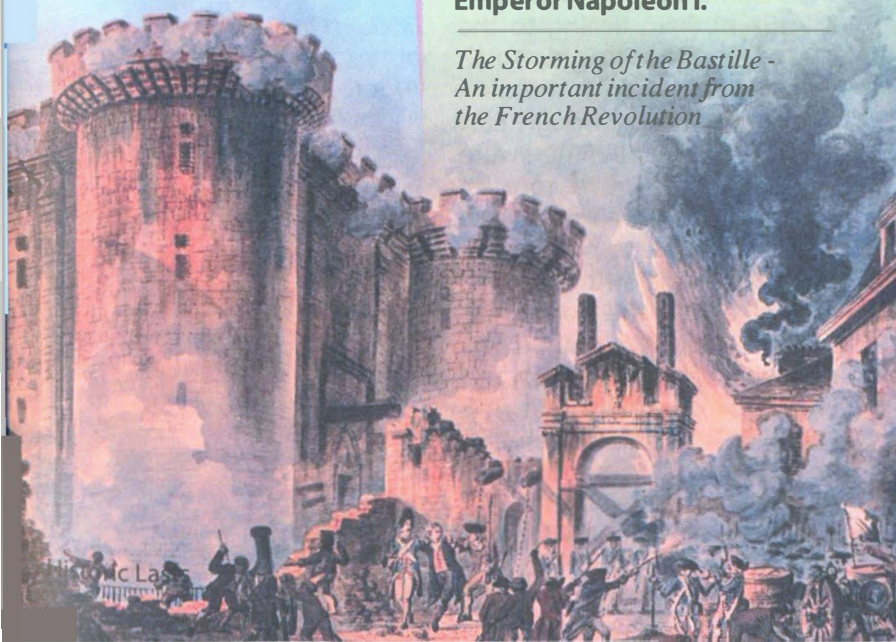
Statue of Lenin

during the late 1980's and early '90s. There was political restructuring, and greater openness to revitalize a struggling economy. There was also a wave of increased nationalism among the member republics, and in December of 1991, as the world watched in amazement, the Soviet Union disintegrated into fifteen separate countries. On 25th December 1991, the Soviet flag was lowered for the last time, marking the last official day of the Soviet Union.

Last Day of French Revolutionary Calendar

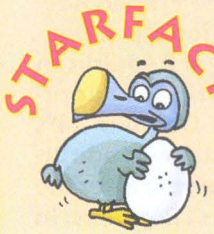
The French Revolutionary Calendar - or Republican Calendar - was officially adopted in France on October 24th, 1793. The calendar was adopted more than one year after the advent of the First Republic. In this calendar, the year had 12 months that were named by a poet. Each month was divided into units of 10 days each. However, the calendar proved to be impractical. It was abolished on 1st January 1806 by Emperor Napoleon I.

The Storming of the Bastille - An important incident from the French Revolution



Last Day of the Third Reich

The term 'Third Reich' was often used to describe the Nazi regime in Germany from January 30th, 1933, to May 8th, 1945. The Nazi's rise to power under Adolf Hitler brought an end to the Weimar Republic, a parliamentary democracy established in defeated Germany after World War I. The Nazi re-



Adolf Hitler

Why is 9th November 1989 significant in the history of the Berlin Wall?

On August 13th, 1961, the East German government erected the Berlin Wall in order to keep its citizens from fleeing to the West. Just past midnight, trucks with soldiers and construction workers rumbled through East Berlin. While most Berliners were sleeping, these crews tore up streets that entered into West Berlin, dug holes to put up concrete posts, and strung barbed wire all across the border between East and West Berlin. Telephone wires between East and West Berlin were also cut. The Berlin Wall stretched over 160 kilometres. It ran not only through the centre of Berlin, but also wrapped around West Berlin, entirely cutting West Berlin off from the rest of East Germany.

The Berlin Wall did prevent the majority of East Germans from emigrating to the West, yet dur-

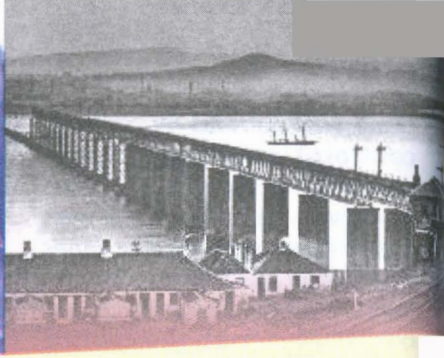
Jubilant Germans on top of the Berlin Wall in the days just before its demolition.

gime was marked by political control of every aspect of society- and by World War II. Germany was defeated in the war, and surrendered to the Allies on 7th May 1945. However, the last day of the Third Reich was on 21st May, with the capture and removal of power of Admiral Karl Donitz, whom Hitler had named as his successor before he committed suicide.

A Nazi March

ing the history of the Berlin Wall, it is estimated that about 5,000 people made it safely across. The fall of the Berlin Wall happened nearly as suddenly as its rise. There had been signs that the Communist bloc was weakening yet it came as a surprise to everyone when at midnight on November 9th / 10th 1989 East Germany's Communist rulers gave permission for gates along the Wall to be opened after hundreds of people converged on crossing points. Berliners from the East surged through, cheering and shouting and were be met by jubilant West Berliners on the other side. Ecstatic crowds immediately began to clamber on top of the Wall and hack large chunks out of the 45 kilometre barrier. The Berlin Wall had become the gateway to freedom in Germany.

Tacoma Narrows Bridge



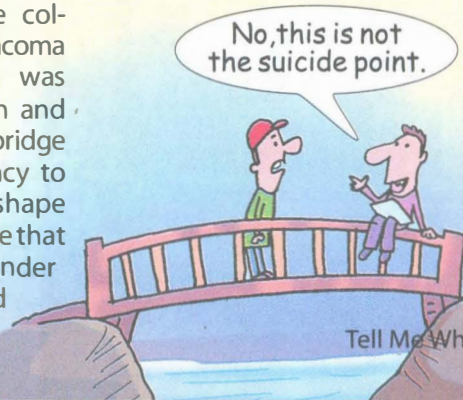
Tay Rail Bridge

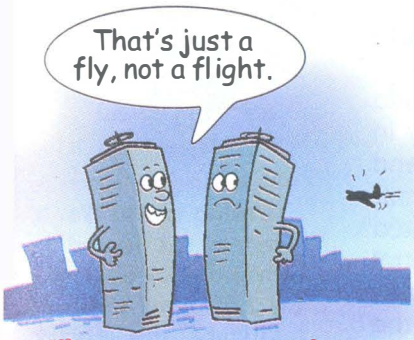
Which are the last days of some famous bridges?

The Tay Rail Bridge was completed in February 1878 to the design of Thomas Bouch. At that time, it was the longest bridge in the world. Less than two years later, at approximately 7:15 p.m. on the stormy night of 28rd December 1879, the central navigation spans of the Tay bridge collapsed into the Firth of Tay at Dundee, taking with them a train, 6 carriages and killing 75 passengers.

Another famous bridge collapse was that of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge(USA). It was revolutionary in its design and historic in its collapse. This bridge was known for its tendency to sway in windstorms. The shape of the bridge was much like that of an aircraft wing, and under windy conditions, it would rise and fall like the movement of a galloping horse. On November 7th, 1940 a large windstorm turned the galloping motion into uncontrolled bucking, and the bridge collapsed.

There have been several other bridges that have collapsed. On October 17th 1989, several bridges in San Francisco, USA, collapsed as the result of an earthquake. Bridges are marvels of engineering, but when they collapse, the marvel turns into a tragedy with terrible consequences.





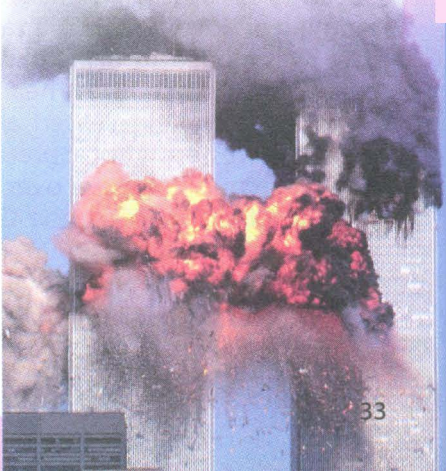
Why can we never forget September 11th?

At 8:45 am, September 11th, 2001, the first of two airlines struck the World Trade Centre in New York. At 9:03, a second plane crashed into a second World Trade Centre tower, and exploded. At 9:43 am, a third passenger plane crashed into the Pentagon, the world's largest office building. At 10:48, police confirmed that a fourth passenger jet had crashed in Western Pennsylvania.

September 11th marks the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil, and the last day of New York's World Trade Centre. Both the North and South Towers had collapsed, resulting in a massive cloud of debris, dust, and smoke. Everyone on the passenger planes that had been hijacked by terrorists was killed, as well as more than 3000 innocent people on the ground. Is it any wonder then that the day 11th September 2001 will always be remembered by us as one of the saddest days in modern times?

World Trade Centre before September 11th 2001....

....and When the Disaster Struck!



Which was the last day of World War I?

World War I was an armed world conflict that took place mostly in Europe between 1914 and 1918 and it was fought by the Allies -Great Britain, France, Russia, and United States- on one side, and the Central Powers -Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire- on the other. The immediate cause of the World War I was the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Austrian heir-apparent to the throne, by a Bosnian Serb, on June 28th, 1914, in Sarajevo. The assassination sparked the chain of events that led straight to 'the war to end all wars'.

The final Allied push towards the German border began on October 17, 1918. As the British, French, and American armies advanced, the alliance between the Central Powers began to collapse. At 5 am on the morning of November 11th, an armistice was signed in a railroad car parked in a French forest near the front lines. Fighting ceased along the entire Western Front at precisely 11 am that morning. After over four years of bloody conflict, the Great War was at an end.

The Railway Carriage in which the Armistice ending World War I was signed

History is Repeated in Reverse

During World War II, France was forced to surrender to Germany on 22nd June 1940. To humiliate the French, the Germans insisted that the armistice be signed in the same railway carriage, in the same forest in which Germany had been forced to surrender in World War I.

The Bismarck

Why are the last days of the German battleship Bismark and the British battle cruiser HMS Hood connected?

The Bismarck was one of the most feared battleships constructed by Nazi Germany. The HMS Hood was a very powerful ship that was the pride of the British navy. During World War II, the two titans faced each other on May the 24th 1941. Hood opened fire on Bismarck. Two minutes later, Bismarck responded to Hood's gunfire, and The Battle of Denmark Strait began. At 06.00, a gigantic explosion ripped the Hood into two. In less than ten minutes of battle, Hood was lost.

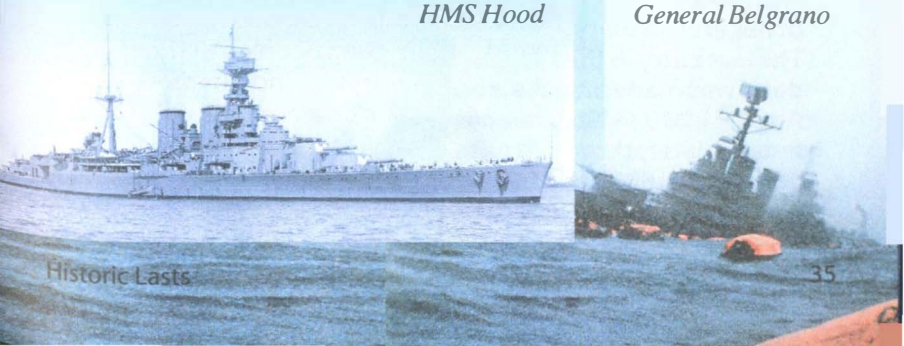
Following this battle, the Bismarck was pursued for more than two days by ships and aircraft of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. On May 27th, the Bismarck was attacked, and in two hours, the German battleship was completely destroyed.

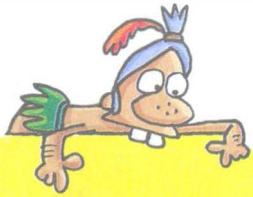
The Sinking of the General Belgrano

General Belgrano was an Argentine cruiser that was sunk by the British submarine HMS Conqueror in 1982, during the Falklands War. The sinking raised a storm of controversy, as the Belgrano was supposedly in a safe zone.

HMS Hood

General Belgrano





STARFACT

Anne Frank's Diary

Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl who lived during the horrors of Nazi Germany, where the Jews were persecuted. She and her family went into hiding, and she kept a record of her life in a diary. The last entry in the dairy was made on August 4th 1944. Six months later, shortly before her 16th birthday, Anne died in a concentration camp.

Why does World War II have many last days?

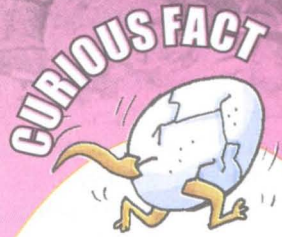
World War II started when Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, launched an unprovoked attack on Poland. Britain and France then declared war on Germany. It soon developed into a total war that involved 61 countries, and 1.7 billion people. The Axis countries consisting of Germany, Italy, and Japan were on one side. The other side was made up of the Allies, and included the USA, UK, France, and Russia among other European nations. Fifty million people lost their lives in this war, and hundreds of millions were injured.

World War II ended with the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. On May 8th 1945, the Allies accepted Ger-

A Battle front of World War II

many's unconditional surrender, and this day marks the end of World War II in Europe. However, though the war had officially ended, it raged on in the Far East, for Japan refused to surrender. The Japanese held on for some more months until atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th.

Japan surrendered to the Allies only on 15th August 1945, and the surrender was officially signed on September 2nd 1945, aboard the battleship USS Missouri. That is why we say that World War II had not one, but many 'last days'!



Hiroo Onoda

Last Soldier

The last soldier to surrender in World War II was Hiroo Onoda, a Japanese soldier. He surrendered only in 1974, 29 years after the Japanese surrendered. He had been living on a remote island, and did not know that the war had ended!

When was the last day of the Vietnam War?

Vietnam is a small country in Southeast Asia. In 1954, it was divided into communist-ruled North Vietnam, and non communist South Vietnam. North Vietnam wanted to end US support of South Vietnam, and to unite the north and south into a single nation. Over the next ten years, tensions in the area increased as the conflict between North and South Vietnam grew. When North Vietnam attacked a US destroyer on August 2nd 1964, USA officially entered the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War was the longest war in which the United States took part. The first U.S. troops entered Vietnam in March 1965. Until 1969, North Vietnam and the United States did most of the fighting. By 1969, the Vietnam War seemed endless, and many Americans opposed American involvement in the war. As a result, United States slowly began to withdraw troops. On 29th April 1975, the US began a massive helicopter evacuation, airlifting 1000 Americans and 6000 South Vietnamese from the capital city of Saigon. The official last day of the war was 30th April 1975, when South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam.

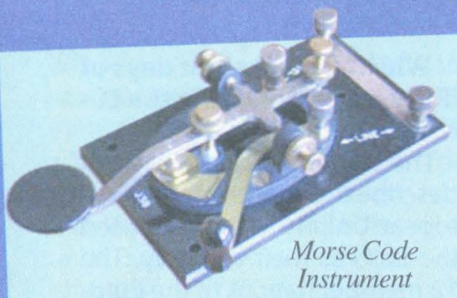
Vietnam War

Which were the last days of different currencies in the Eurozone?

The term Eurozone is used to describe the countries of the European Union that have adopted the Euro as their currency. The 12 member nations of the Eurozone had to give up their own currencies in the process. The first two months of 2002 saw the last days of several currencies in Europe. The last day for the Dutch guilder was 28th January 2002, while February 9th and 17th were the last days of the Irish punt, and French franc. February 28th marked the last day for the Austrian, Belgian, Finish, German, Greek, Italian, Luxemburg, Portuguese, and Spanish currencies. All these countries now had one common currency in place of 12 different ones- and that currency was the Euro. England still holds on to Pound Sterling.

Euro Nations

The Euro also became the currency of countries outside the Eurozone. Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, the Vatican, and the French Overseas Territories including Martinique and Guadalupe in the Caribbean and Reunion in the Indian Ocean all accepted the Euro as their currency from 2002 onwards.



Morse Code Instrument

When was the last day the Morse code was used?

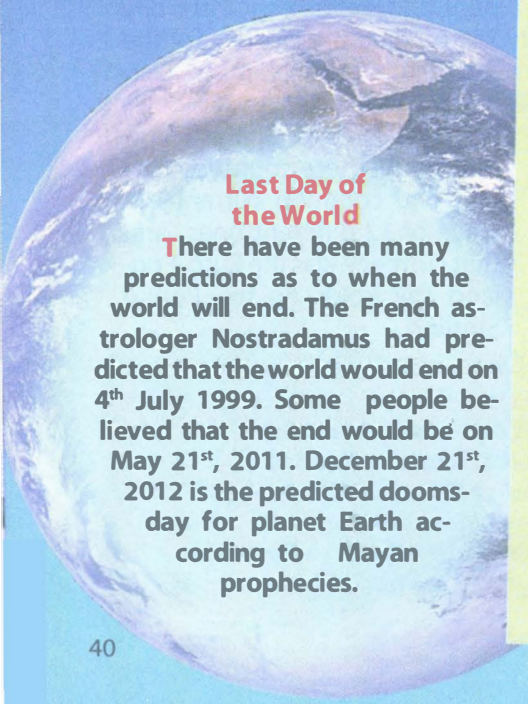
Morse code was a system of communication in which letters and numbers were represented by dots and dashes that could be transmitted by telegraph in the form of sound, and also as flashes of light. The code was invented by Samuel Morse. The Morse code was used extensively by ships at sea. It was used in emergencies throughout the world. However, as technology advanced, the Morse code became obsolete.

The last official day of Morse code for distress sig-

Why was the Julian calendar abandoned?

The Julian calendar was introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 BC. It had twelve months in a year, like the present calendar, and a leap year every four years. How-

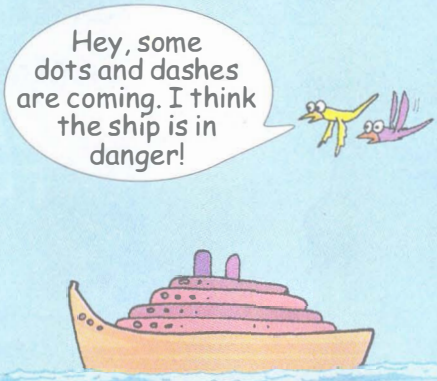
Bust of Julius Caesar



Last Day of the World

There have been many predictions as to when the world will end. The French astrologer Nostradamus had predicted that the world would end on 4th July 1999. Some people believed that the end would be on May 21st, 2011. December 21st, 2012 is the predicted doomsday for planet Earth according to Mayan prophecies.

nals at sea was January 31st, 1999. On July 12th of the same year, the last commercial Morse transmission was made by Globe Wireless in USA, and it was the same as the very first Morse code message - 'What hath God wrought?' The Morse code, the language which has saved countless sailors' lives, was being consigned to history, a victim of technology.

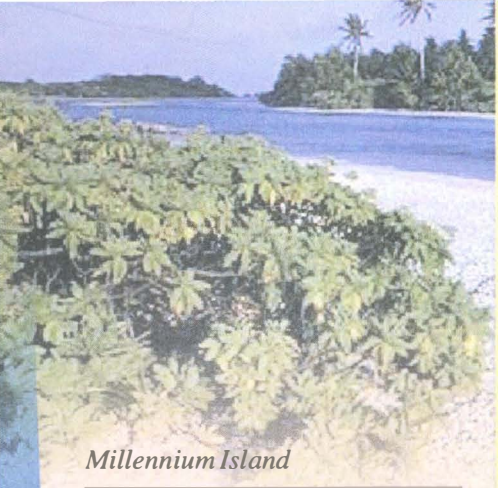


ever, the 4-year rule was not followed in the first years after the introduction of the Julian calendar. Due to a counting error, every 3rd year was a leap year in the first years of this calendar's existence. There was also a period without a leap year that was ordered by the Emperor Augustus, in order to make up for the surplus of leap years introduced previously. On the whole, the Julian calendar proved inaccurate when calculating the spring equinox and religious festivals, and so, it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar, which is used to this day.

4th October 1582 is generally accepted as the last day of the Julian calendar. However, some countries continued to use it for hundreds of years more.

Last Month

Did you know that December was not always the last month of the year? The Roman year began and ended on 25th March, making December the 10th month. In fact, the name 'December' is derived from the Latin word for 'ten'. It was only when the Gregorian calendar was adopted that the year began on January 1st and December became the last month of the year.



Millennium Island

Millennium Island

STARFACT

Caroline Island is one of the first points of land on Earth to see the New Year every January 1st. It was the first place on Earth to witness the dawn of the new millennium, and in honour of that privilege, was renamed Millennium Island.

Which was the last day of the second millennium?

When did the second millennium end? Some people say that it was on December 31st 2000. They point out that the calendar runs from 1 BC to 1 AD without the year 0 in between. So, two thousand years since the birth of Christ were over only at the end of the year 2000.

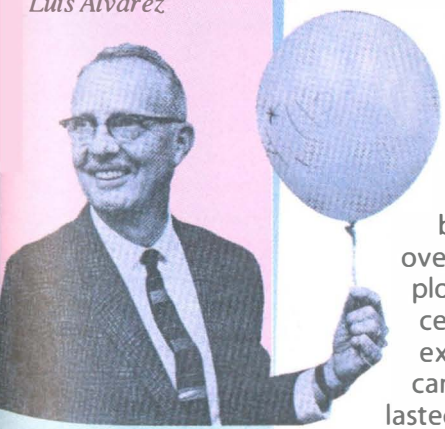
Hi, buddy let's celebrate the new millennium.
No, We have to wait for one more year.
WELCOME NEW MILLENNIUM 31 DEC, 1999
HAPPY NEW YEAR 2000

They may be right, but most people celebrated the last day of the second millennium on December 31st 1999. However, the millennium ended at different times in different parts of the world. The first place to witness the last day of the old millennium was the Caroline Islands belonging to the Republic of Kiribati. These islands lie in the West Pacific, and are 14 hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime. The last place in which the old millennium lingered was Ebon Atoll, which is part of the Republic of Marshall Islands. Ebon Atoll is 12 hours behind Greenwich Meantime.

A Man of Talents

Luis Alvarez was a physicist with wide ranging interests. It was he who put forward the idea that dinosaurs might have been wiped out by the impact of an asteroid crashing to Earth. Alvarez's colleagues sometimes called him the 'prize wild idea man,' because of the huge range of his activities. He won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1968.

Luis Alvarez



LAST TO DATE

An Asteroid

Which was the last major asteroid impact?

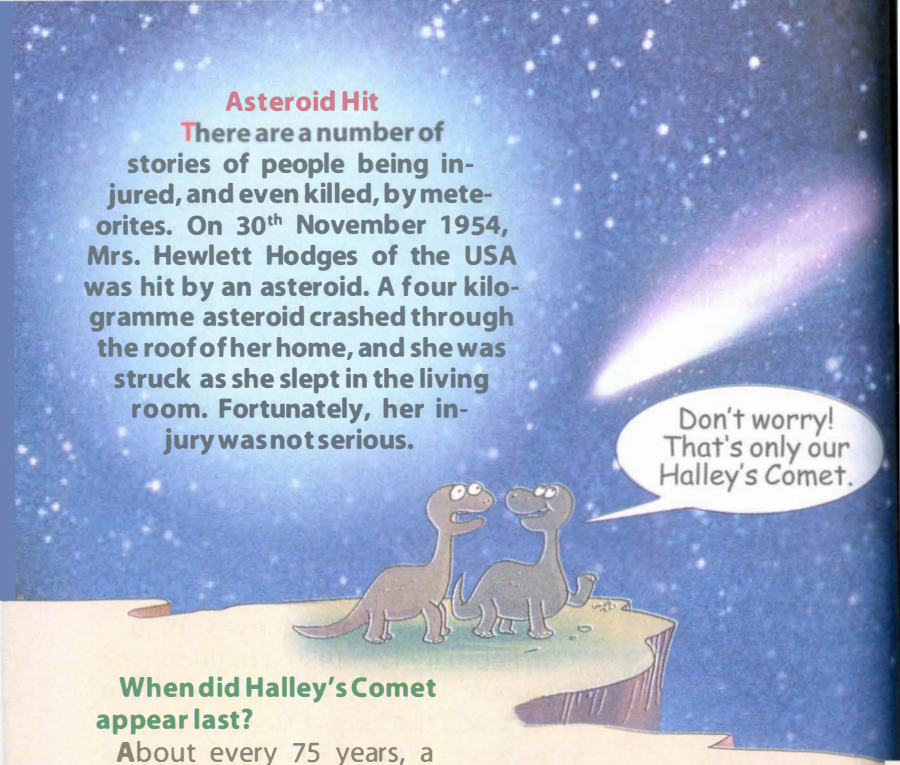
Asteroids, comets, and meteorites are the debris left over after a meteoroid has burned up in the outer atmosphere. Whenever any of these collide with the Earth, the result is devastating. The last such impact occurred in the year 1930.

On February 17th, 1930, a meteorite hit Paragould, in Northeast Arkansas. At that time, it was the largest stony meteorite in the world to be seen falling and recovered.

Another famous asteroid impact happened on Earth on 13th August of the same year, when an asteroid exploded in the sky above the River Curuca in Brazil. At about eight o'clock, the sun became blood-red, and darkness fell over the region. Three mighty explosions were heard in rapid succession. Immediately after the explosions, the whole forest became a blazing inferno, which lasted for several months.

Asteroid Hit

There are a number of stories of people being injured, and even killed, by meteorites. On 30th November 1954, Mrs. Hewlett Hodges of the USA was hit by an asteroid. A four kilogramme asteroid crashed through the roof of her home, and she was struck as she slept in the living room. Fortunately, her injury was not serious.



When did Halley's Comet appear last?

About every 75 years, a very special member of the solar system comes close to the Sun. It is Halley's Comet, which is the brightest and most noticeable of all the comets that appear regularly. Do you know what a comet is? Comets are objects in space that are made up of gas, ice, dust, and small particles of rock. They travel around the Sun in an orbit. They are warmed up as they approach the Sun. This causes the comet to form a head and tail. The head is the cloud-like mass we see in the front. The tail is the trailing part which is made up of small particles and ice.

Halley's Comet is named after Edmond Halley, who calculated its orbit. Though it was noticed by Chinese astronomers as early as 467 BC, it was Edmund Halley who recorded its appearance in 1682. The comet has appeared regularly every 75 to 76 years, in 1758, 1835, 1910 and 1986. Its last appearance was in 1986, and it is expected to appear next in 2061.

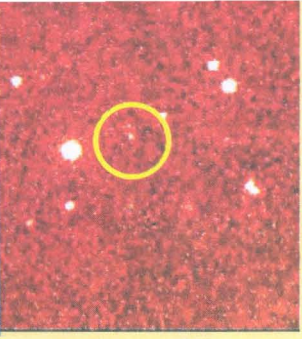
Shoemaker-Levy 9

In July 1994, the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet broke apart and collided with Jupiter. This event gave astronomers a unique opportunity to observe what happens when such a collision occurs. The largest fragments were 2 kms in diameter, and struck Jupiter at a speed of around 60 km/s. The impact scars were clearly visible for months after the impact.

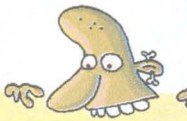
Why is Neptune considered the last planet to be discovered in our solar system?

Our solar system consists of the sun, planets, moons, dwarf planets, asteroids, comets, meteors, and others. Of all the planets in our solar system, the six nearest the Sun can be seen with the naked eye. So these planets- Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn- have been observed since ancient times. The first planet to be discovered using a telescope was Uranus, in 1781. Neptune, the eighth planet was discovered only in 1846. Pluto was discovered in 1930, but it is now not classified as a planet, and so Neptune is considered to be the last planet to be discovered in our solar system.

Neptune



Sedna

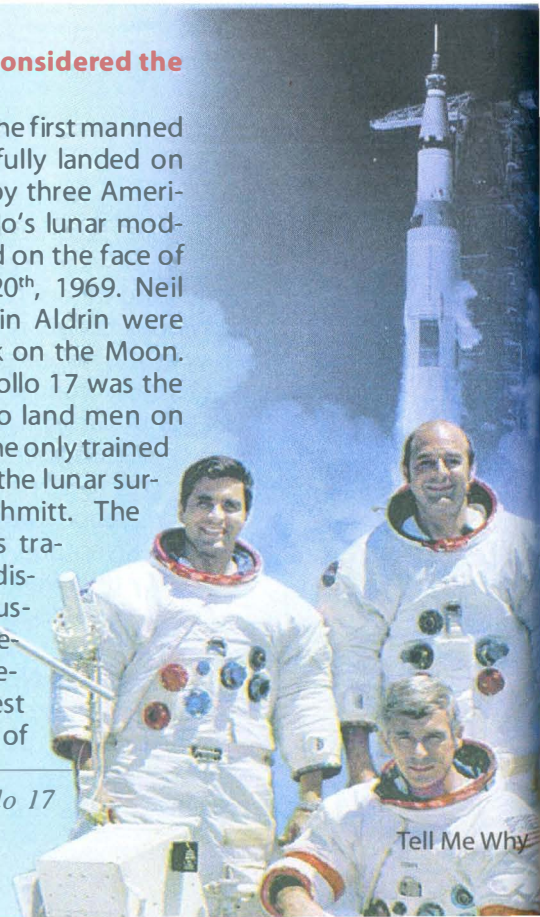


Sedna

Astronomers have detected what could be a new planet in our solar system. It was first seen by astronomers at California's Palomar Observatory, and has been given the name 'Sedna'. Sedna, or 2003 VB12, as it was originally designated, is the most distant object yet found orbiting our Sun. However, there is some debate as to whether it is a true planet, or a planetoid like Pluto.

Why is Apollo 17 considered the last moon mission?

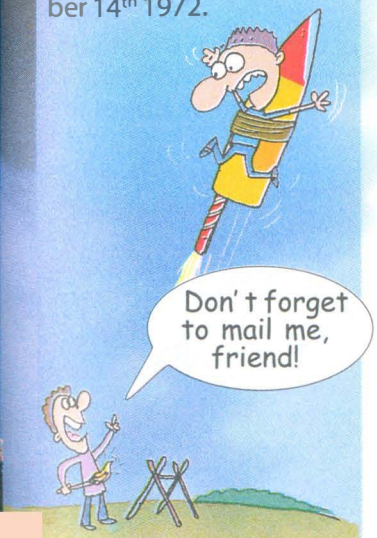
The Apollo 11 was the first manned mission that successfully landed on the Moon. Manned by three American astronauts, Apollo's lunar module, the Eagle, landed on the face of the Moon on July 20th, 1969. Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin were the first men to walk on the Moon. Three years later, Apollo 17 was the last Apollo Mission to land men on the Moon. It carried the only trained geologist to walk on the lunar surface – Harrison Schmitt. The Apollo 17 astronauts traversed the greatest distance on the Moon, using the lunar roving vehicle. They also returned the greatest amount of samples of



Crew of Apollo 17

President Kennedy - Minutes before his Assassination

rock and soil. The last human being to walk on the Moon was the Commander of Apollo 17, Eugene Cernan. No humans have visited the Moon since December 14th 1972.



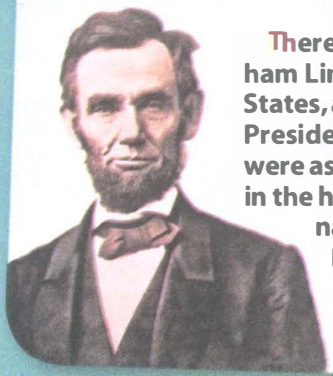
Who was the last President of the United States to be assassinated?

Four American presidents have been assassinated while in office. They were Abraham Lincoln in 1865, James Garfield in 1881, William McKinley in 1901, and John F. Kennedy in 1963.

President Kennedy was the last American president to be assassinated. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, were travelling in a motorcade through the streets of Dallas, on November 22nd, 1963. At 12:30 P.M., shots rang out. The president, who was riding in the back seat of a convertible, was hit in the neck and head. He died at 1:00 P.M. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested as the suspected assassin of Kennedy. On November 24th, while in police custody, Oswald was murdered.

AMAZING

Similar Presidents



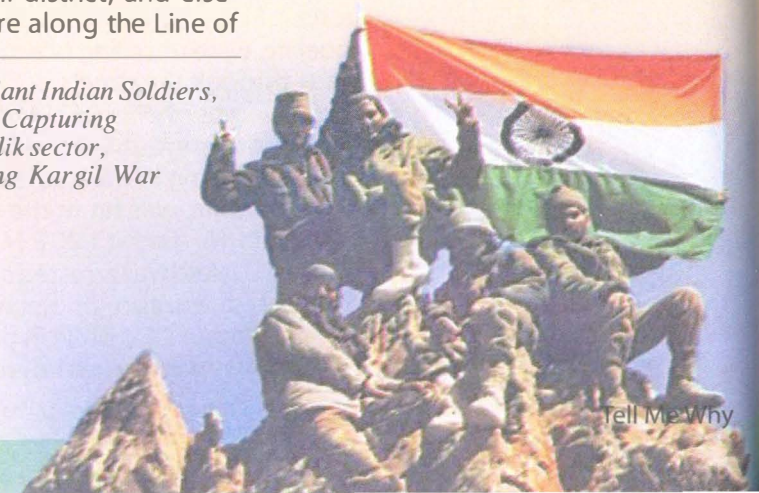
There are many similarities between Abraham Lincoln, the first President of the United States, and John Kennedy. Lincoln was elected President in 1860, Kennedy in 1960. Both were assassinated on a Friday, both were shot in the head, and both were succeeded by men named Johnson. Both Lincoln's and Kennedy's assassins were themselves assassinated before their trials.

Abraham Lincoln

When was the last war fought by India ?

The Kargil War, was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil district, and elsewhere along the Line of Control. The conflict is also referred to as Operation Vijay, which was the name of the Indian operation to clear the Kargil sector.

The cause of the war was the infiltration of Pakistani soldiers and militants into positions on the Indian side of the



Jubilant Indian Soldiers, after Capturing Batalik sector, during Kargil War

Spanish American War

The last war fought between Spain and the USA was in 1898. The war ended disastrously for Spain which lost Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to the USA.

LOC, which serves as the border between the two states. Pakistani paramilitary forces were led by GeneralAshrafRashid. The Indian Army, later on supported by the Indian Air Force, recaptured all the positions on the Indian side of the LOC infiltrated by the Pakistani troops and militants.

This was only the second direct ground war between any two countries after they had developed nuclear weapons.

LAST WORDS

Socrates : "Crito, we owe a rooster to Asclepius. Please, don't forget to pay the debt"

Pablo Picaso : "Drink to me"

Julius Caesar : "Et Tu Brute?"

Archimedes : "Wait till I have finished my problem"

Beethoven : "Friends applaud, the comedy is over."

Franklin D Roosevelt : "I have a terrific headache"

Karl Marx : "Go on, get out! Last words are for fools who haven't said enough"

Winston Churchill : "I am ready to meet my maker. Whether my maker is prepared for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter"

Leonardo da Vinci : "I have offended God and mankind because my work did not reach the quality it should have"

Napoleon I : "Chief of the Army"

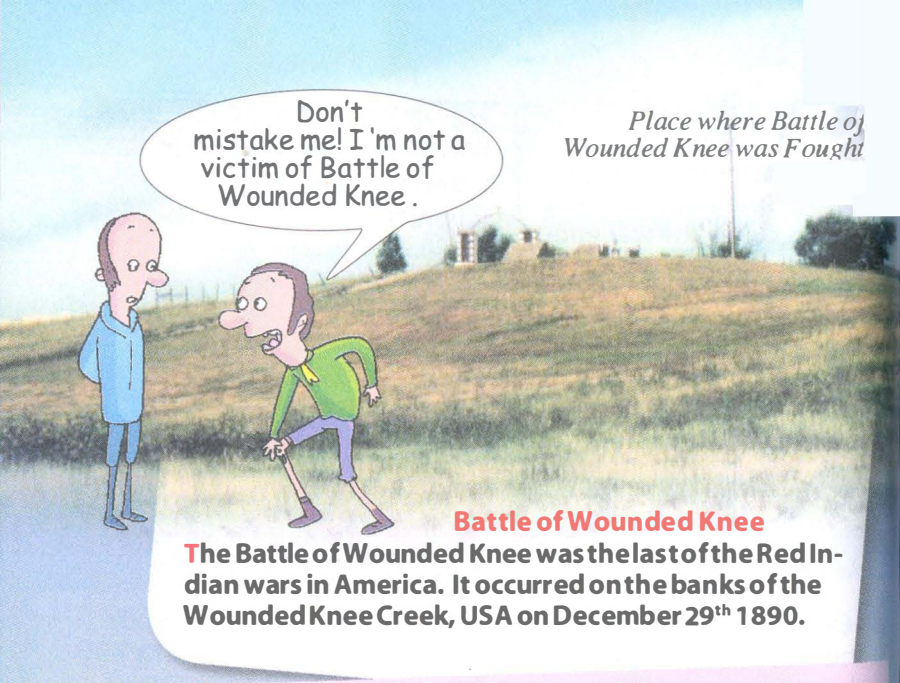
George Bernard Shaw : "I want to sleep..."

Mao Zedong : "I feel ill. Call the doctors"

Charles Darwin : "I am not the least afraid to die"

Joan of Arc : "Hold the cross high so I may see it through the flames!"

Mahatma Gandhi : "He Ram"



Place where Battle of Wounded Knee was Fought

Battle of Wounded Knee

The Battle of Wounded Knee was the last of the Red Indian wars in America. It occurred on the banks of the Wounded Knee Creek, USA on December 29th 1890.

Who was the last British Prime Minister to be assassinated?

Spencer Perceval was the only British Prime Minister to be assassinated, so he can claim to be both the first and last British premier to be killed by an assassin! He was the Prime Minister of Britain from 4 th October 1809 to 11th May 1812. Spencer Perceval was almost 47 years old when George III appointed him as Prime Minister. On 11th May 1812, while on his way to take part in a debate, Perceval was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons by John Bellingham, who had been trying unsuccessfully to obtain government compensation for debts incurred while he was in Russia. Bellingham gave himself up immediately, was tried at the Old Bailey, condemned to death on 15th May, and he was executed three days later.

Spencer Perceval

Napoleon

The Last Invasion in Britain

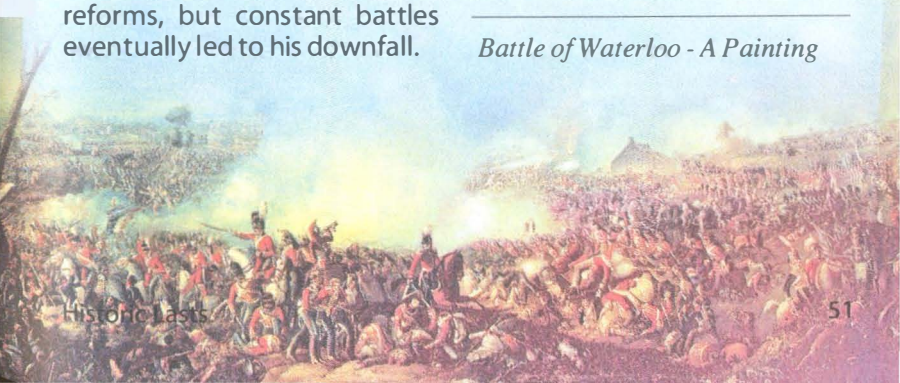
The last invasion in Britain came when the French invaded Wales. In 1797, Napoleon Bonaparte was busy conquering in central Europe. In his absence the newly formed French government, the Directory, decided to invade Britain. Within two days, the invasion had collapsed, and French force surrendered to the British.

Which was Napoleon's last battle?

Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the greatest military leaders in history. He was made commander of the French army in Italy. In 1798, Napoleon conquered Ottoman-ruled Egypt. In 1804, he became the Emperor of France. Napoleon helped remake the map of Europe, and established many government reforms, but constant battles eventually led to his downfall.

Napoleon's last battle was the Battle of Waterloo. It was fought between the French, under the command of Napoleon, and the Allied armies commanded by the Duke of Wellington from Britain, and General Blucher from Prussia. Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo marked the end of the Emperor's final bid for power, and the final chapter in his remarkable career.

Battle of Waterloo - A Painting

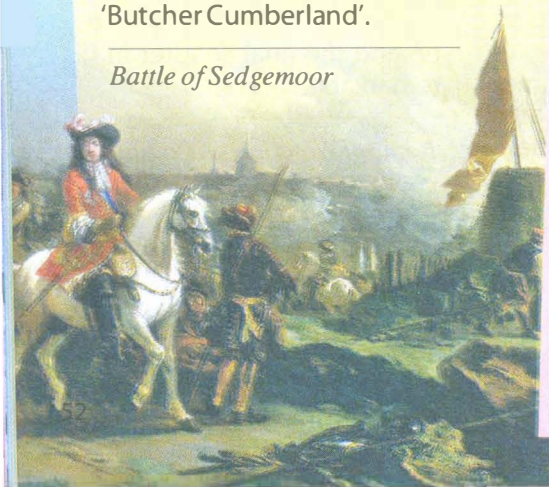


Which are the last battles on British soil?

The Battle of Sedgemoor was the last battle fought on English soil. It was fought in 1685, when England was ruled by King James II. James faced a rebellion, led by the Duke of Monmouth. The rebellion was easily crushed after the battle of Sedgemoor in 1685.

The Battle of Culloden was the last battle in mainland Britain. It was fought on Scottish soil in 1746, at a place called Culloden Moor. The Scots, led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart fought against the English Duke of Cumberland. Prince Charlie fought on behalf of his father, James Francis Edward Stuart, in a bid to establish the rebirth of the Scottish nation under Scottish rule. The Scottish army was massacred by the English, and Cumberland became notorious as 'Butcher Cumberland'.

Battle of Sedgemoor



Last Execution in Tower of London

The last execution in the Tower of London took place on August 14th, 1941, when Josef Jakobs, a German spy, was shot by an eight-man firing squad. He steadfastly refused to see a

Who was the last prisoner in the Tower of London?

The Tower of London has a great place in history. It is the oldest fortress, palace, and prison of its type anywhere in Europe. It has also been the home of the Royal Menagerie and the Crown Jewels. With a long history of executions, murder and torture, ranging from hanging, beheading, to being hung, drawn and quartered, the Tower of London also ranks as one of the most haunted castles in Britain.

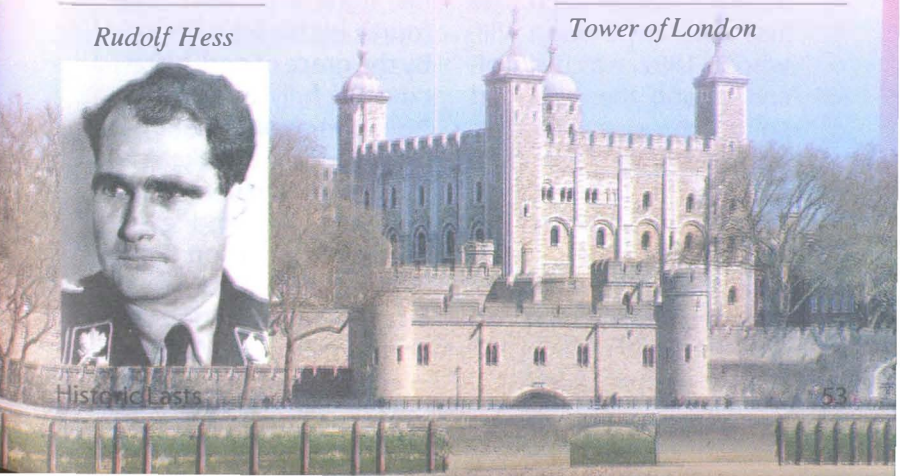
priest, even during the last moments. The eight-man firing squad from the Scots Guards aimed at a piece of white lint pinned over his heart. Five of the eight shots pierced the lint at precisely 7:12 A.M. There have been no executions at the Tower since then.

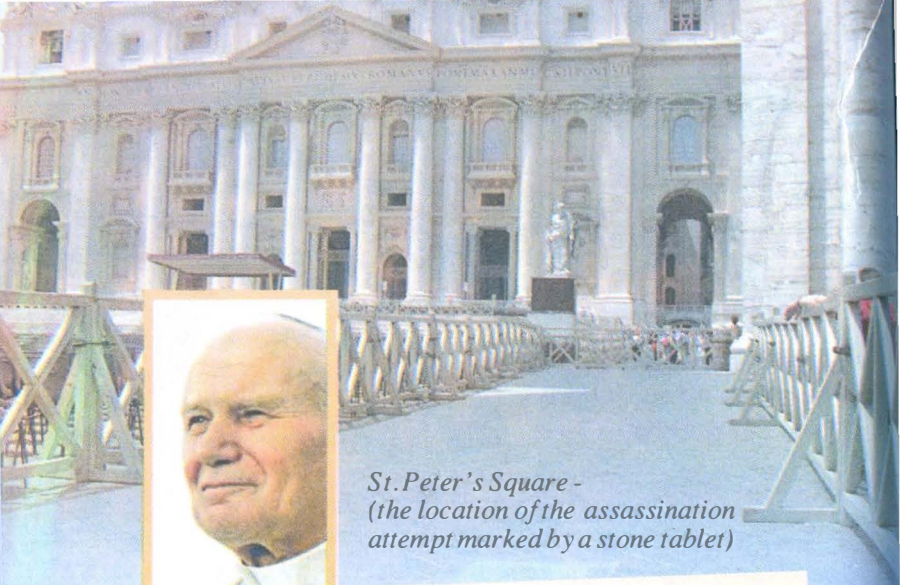
Main Entrance to the Tower of London

The Tower of London has held many famous prisoners, including Sir Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, and Sir Walter Raleigh. The last prisoner to be held in the Tower was Rudolf Hess, who served as Hitler's deputy in World War II. Hess flew alone to Britain to try and negotiate a peace deal, without the backing of his country. He was found by a Scots farmer, and arrested. He was held for four days in the Tower of London. Later, he faced trial for war crimes at Nuremburg, and was convicted. Hess spent the last years of his life in the Spandau prison in Germany, where he died in 1987.

Rudolf Hess

Tower of London





St. Peter's Square - (the location of the assassination attempt marked by a stone tablet)

Pope John Paul II

Who was the last Pope to face an assassination attempt?

Over the centuries, many popes have been murdered or assassinated. The first was Pope John VIII, who in 1882, was first poisoned, and then clubbed to death. Most murders happened in the Middle Ages. In modern times, fortunately, no Pope has been assassinated so far. However, there was an assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II. On 13th May 1981, the Pope was being driven in his Popemobile when he was hit by four bullets fired from a pistol.

Two bullets struck him in the stomach, one hit his right arm, and the fourth hit his little finger. By the grace of god, he recovered fully after a five hour operation. The Pope forgave his attacker, a Turkish man named Mehmet Ali Agca, and even visited him in prison. John Paul II was the last Pope to face an assassination attempt.

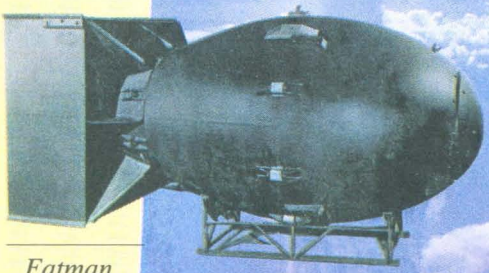
When was the last nuclear bomb dropped?

The first nuclear bomb meant to kill humans exploded over Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6th, 1945. The last nuclear bomb was dropped three days later, on the 9th August 1945, on Nagasaki.

The bomb that was used for Nagasaki on August 9th 1945, was called 'Fat Man'. This weapon weighed about 4500 kilogrammes, and was approximately 3 metres and 20 centimetres long. It had an explosive capacity equivalent to around 20,000 tonnes of higher explosives. Almost all living things, which included humans and animals, were burned to death as a result of the bombing.

The survivors and their children suffered horrific forms of radiation sickness long after the explosion. The bomb dropped on Nagasaki was also the last major act of World War II, before the Japanese surrendered.

Estimates of people who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are above 1, 40, 000. People continued to suffer radiation diseases for more than two generation. This event is the most inhuman act in human history.



Fatman

Little Boy

The bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6th 1945 was code named 'Little Boy'. It was the first nuclear weapon used in warfare. The bomb was dropped from an American war plane, known as Enola Gay.

Which was the last space shuttle disaster?

The space Shuttle Columbia was launched on January 16th, 2003. Columbia was on a 16-day science research mission in Earth's orbit which performed experiments in space. Columbia broke up over North central Texas on Feb 1st, 2003, as it descended from orbit into the atmosphere toward a landing at Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. Seven astronauts aboard the shuttle were lost in the disaster.

Columbia was the oldest shuttle in the NASA fleet. It first was launched in 1981. The fatal flight was its 28th mission, and the last space shuttle disaster to date. Indian born aerospace engineer Kalpana Chawla died in this disaster.

Kalpana Chawla

Columbia Lifting off on its Final Mission

When was the last outbreak of plague?

Plague has caused more fear and terror than perhaps any other infectious disease in the history of humankind. Plague bacteria are carried by fleas that infect wild rodents, rabbits and cats, which then pass the disease on to humans. Plague has laid claim to nearly 200 million lives, and generally been considered a disease of the Middle Ages. However, there have been multiple outbreaks in India and Africa during the last 20 years.

India was plague-free from 1966 until 1994. In August 1994, a large number of rats died in Mamala, a village near Beed. In September and October, there were cases of plague in the city of Beed in the state of Maharashtra. Shortly afterwards, there were numerous cases in the coastal city of Surat, 300 km further west in the state of Gujarat. Hundreds of thousands of people fled, the city and headed for Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta. The panic reactions and the enormous media response, which then followed show how this disease still plays on the imagination and fears of mankind. Thankfully, this appears to be the last outbreak of plague in India. What we must remember is that though plague can be fatal, it can be treated with antibiotics if detected early.

Plague Doctor (1656)

Plague Bacteria

Which was the last case of smallpox?

Smallpox is a serious, contagious, and sometimes fatal, infectious disease. There is no specific treatment for smallpox disease, and the only prevention is vaccination. The 'pox' part of 'smallpox' is derived from the Latin word for 'spotted'. It refers to the raised bumps that appear on the face and body of an infected person.

Smallpox, which is believed to have originated over 3,000 years ago, is one of the most devastating diseases known to humanity. For centuries, repeated epidemics swept across continents, decimating populations, and changing the course of history. However, the disease is now eradicated after a successful worldwide vaccination program.

The last naturally occurring case in the world was in Somalia in 1977. In October, 1977, Ali Maow Maalin of Somalia contracted Variola minor Smallpox , becoming the last person in the world to contract smallpox naturally. On October 22nd, 1977, he contracted the disease. He ultimately recovered from the disease.

Last Small Pox Death

The last smallpox death was that of Janet Parker, an English medical photographer. She was exposed to smallpox in a laboratory accident, and passed away in September of 1978. On May 8th, 1980, the World health Organization declared smallpox eradicated.

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw

Field Marshal K .M. Cariappa

Who was the last Field Marshal of India?

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw crafted India's greatest military victory in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. This was the war that created not just history, but also a new nation-Bangladesh. Shortly before he retired in January 1973, he was made a Field Marshal. Manekshaw is the first of only two Indian military officers to hold the highest rank of Field Marshal of the Indian Army. The other person to hold this rank was Field Marshal K M Cariappa, who was conferred the rank of Field Marshal in 1986. He led the Indian forces during the Indo Pakistan War of 1947. Sam Manekshaw was the only Field Marshal to have been appointed to this rank while still a serving officer. Cariappa was appointed to this rank more than 30 years after his retirement.

Last to Survive

Rahima Banu from the Barisal district of Bangladesh, is the last known person to have been infected with naturally occurring Variola major smallpox. The case occurred on 16th October 1975. The World Health Organization team cared for Banu, and she recovered fully.

GREAT GOODBYES

Which was Magellan's last journey?

Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese sea captain. In 1513, Magellan asked King Manuel of Portugal for permission to sail to the Spice Islands in the Far East. The king refused Magellan's proposal, so in 1518, Magellan went to Spain. Magellan convinced King Charles I of Spain to support his voyage. The king promised Magellan one-fifth of the profits from the voyage to the Spice Islands.

Ferdinand Magellan

The voyage began on September 20th, 1519. From his ship, Magellan commanded a total of 241 men and a fleet of five ships. The fleet sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to South America, and followed the South American coast. In late March 1520, Magellan's fleet anchored at Puerto San Julian in what is now southern Argentina, and resumed their voyage on October 18th.

Magellan and his men were the first Europeans ever to sail across the Pacific, and it was far larger than anyone had imagined. They went for 98 days without seeing any land. They ran out of food, and used almost all their water. They finally reached the Philippines where they stayed for many weeks. On April 27th, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan was killed when he took part in a battle between rival Filipino groups, and that was the end of Magellan's last journey.

Why is Horatio Nelson's last battle memorable?

Nelson was a British naval commander and national hero. He won many victories against the French, but lost his right eye and right arm in battle. A courageous leader, he was bold enough to disobey orders if he thought it necessary. At the Battle of Copenhagen, he ignored orders to cease action by putting his telescope to his blind eye and claiming he couldn't seen the signal to withdraw!

Nelson's most famous engagement was also his last. On October 21st 1805, at Cape Trafalgar, Nelson saved Britain from threat of invasion by Napoleon, but it would be his last battle. Nelson's fleet engaged the enemy and was in the process of achieving his greatest triumph when he was shot by a French marine. The bullet entered his left shoulder and pierced the lung, before lodging against his spine. Four hours later, the admiral died, just as his fleet was completing its victory.

Admiral Nelson

Battle of Trafalgar - A Painting

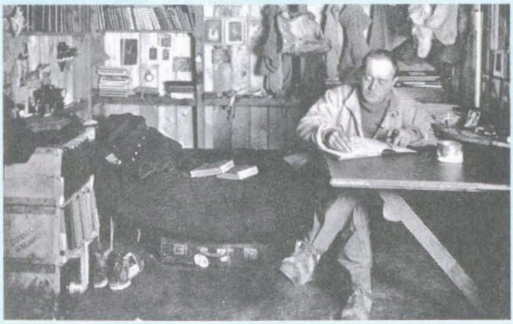
Which was David Livingstone's last expedition?

David Livingstone was a missionary, and one of the greatest European explorers of Africa.

In 1842, he began a four year expedition to find a route from the upper Zambezi to the coast. This filled huge gaps in western knowledge of Central and Southern Africa. In 1855, Livingstone discovered a spectacular waterfall which he named 'Victoria Falls'. He reached the mouth of the Zambezi on the Indian Ocean in May 1856, becoming the first European to cross the width of Southern Africa.

David Livingstone

He returned to Britain to be welcoming the first European to cross the width of Southern Africa.



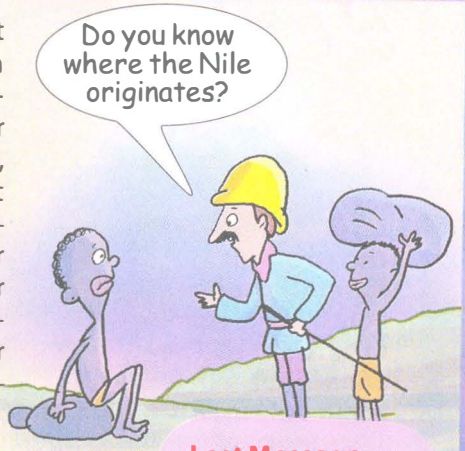
Robert Scott

Why was Robert Scott's last journey a tragic one?

A century ago, in 1910, a British naval officer Robert Falcon Scott dreamt of being the first man to reach the South Pole. He led his team through miserable conditions and struggled with frostbite, the death of their ponies, and a shortage of food. When the British team finally arrived at the South Pole, they found the Norwegian flag flying there. The Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had beat them in the race to the South Pole by five weeks!

Robert Scott's return trip was a tragic one. One of his men went insane, and another disappeared. All five members died, and the last three were overwhelmed by a blizzard when only a few

comed as a hero, but soon left for Africa again. This expedition proved to be his last. After nothing was heard from him for many months, Henry Stanley, an explorer and journalist, set out to find Livingstone. This resulted in their meeting near Lake Tanganyika in October 1871 during which Stanley uttered the famous phrase, 'Dr Livingstone I presume?' Livingstone died on 1st May 1873.



Scott's Team

miles from their depot. Their bodies were later recovered, together with Scott's diaries, their records, and valuable scientific collections.

Last Message

Robert Scott's last message was found by his side, when his body was discovered eight months later. He had written 'We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore, we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined still to do our best to the last...'

Indian Anna

An anna was a currency unit formerly used in South India, equal to 1/16 rupee. The anna is not commonly used since India decimalised its currency in 1957. Sometimes, 50 paise is colloquially referred to as 8 annas(Athanni in Hindi and Urdu, and Ettu ana, pronounced 'Ettna' in Tamil, Malayalam and Entu Aane pronounced as Entane in Kannada) and 25 paise as 4 annas. There was a coin of one anna, and also half-annas of copper and two-anna pieces of silver.

Why does Mallory and Irvine's last climb remain a mystery?

George Mallory and Sandy Irvine were both British climbers. Having climbed extensively in Britain and the Alps, Mallory was invited to join the first Everest expedition in 1921. On his third and last expedition to Mount Everest, Mallory and Irvine climbed to their last camp at 8138 metres high up on the North Ridge of Everest. The pair's last known sighting was only a few hundred metres from the summit.

Mallory's ultimate fate was unknown for 75 years, until his body was discovered in 1999 by an expedition that had set out to search for the climbers' remains.

Whether or not Mallory and Irvine reached the summit before they died remains a subject of speculation and continuing research.

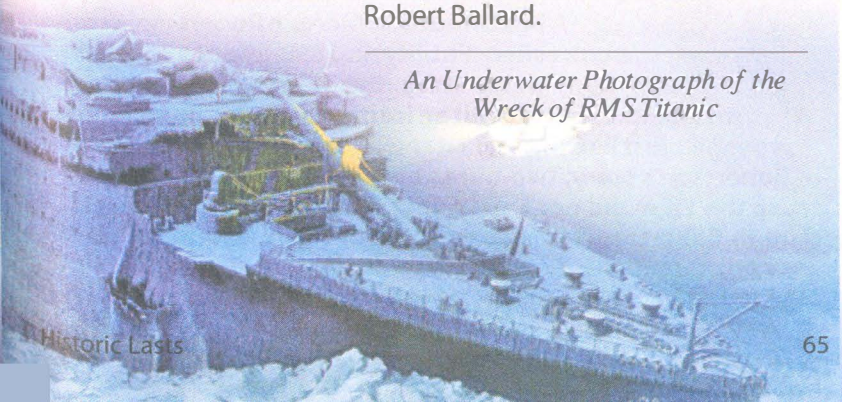
George Mallory

Why is the first and last voyage of the Titanic a part of history?

Who has not heard of the Titanic? It was the largest ship in the world at the time that it was built. It was considered to be unsinkable due to its innovative design and strong steel hull. The ship was the last word in luxury, and truly a floating palace.

The Titanic set sail from Southampton, England to New York on April 10th 1912. It had more than 2,200 passengers and crew members on board, yet was only equipped with 16 lifeboats which would only hold only 1,708 people. The first days of the voyage towards New York were like a party. Passengers celebrated in grand fashion. But on the 14th of April when the Titanic was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, tragedy struck. A lookout spotted an iceberg at 11.40 pm, but it was too late to turn around. The Titanic hit the iceberg. The hull of the ship was so badly damaged that tonnes of water flooded in. The Titanic finally split apart down the middle, and sank. Two-thirds of her 2,200 passengers went down with the ship.

The unsinkable ship that sank lay beneath the Atlantic Ocean for 71 years until the wreck was discovered by an underwater explorer named Robert Ballard.

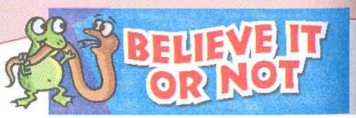


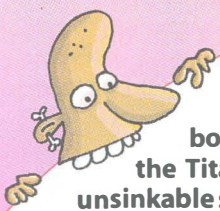
An Underwater Photograph of the Wreck of RMS Titanic

The Hindenburg

Why did the Hindenburg's last flight, mark the end of an era?

An airship is an aircraft that gets its lift from a large balloon filled with gas-either hydrogen, or helium. It is powered by an engine. The Hindenburg was the largest airship ever built – it was over 243 metres long from its nose to its massive tail fins. On 6th May 1937, the Hindenburg was coming to land in New Jersey after a routine transatlantic flight from Germany. The airship pulled up to its mooring post, let down its ropes to the ground crew, and at that point something went horribly wrong. A fire started near the tail, and ignited the rest of the hydrogen in the ship very quickly. The Hindenburg exploded into flames, killing 36 people. The last journey of the Hindenburg also marked the end of the era of airships, as Adolf Hitler banned all further airship flights on May 11th.





Sixth Sense

A British author, Morgan Robertson wrote a book called 'Futility' in 1898 about a ship called the Titan. In his story, the Titan was a supposedly unsinkable ship that hit an iceberg and sank on its maiden voyage...just like the real Titanic. Another similarity was that in Robertson's story, two thirds of the passengers perished because the Titan did not have enough lifeboats! It was almost as though Robertson had a sixth sense of the disaster that was to happen more than a decade later. Funnily enough, the story was rejected by publishers because they felt that it was not credible.

Princess Diana

Why is it said that Princess Diana made two last journeys?

Diana, Princess of Wales, died after a car crash in Paris on August 31st 1997. The accident happened after the princess left the Ritz Hotel in the French capital with her companion, Dodi Al Fayed. This was destined to be her last car journey. Their Mercedes car, which was apparently being pursued at high speed by photographers on motorbikes, hit a pillar, and smashed into a wall. Mr. Al Fayed and the chauffeur died on the spot, but the princess and her bodyguard were cut from the wreckage and rushed to hospital, where surgeons tried in vain for two hours to save her life.

The news of her death was greeted with shock and horror, sorrow, and outpourings of grief. Her funeral marked her final journey, as her coffin was borne on a flower bedecked gun carriage. Over a million people lined the route of the funeral cortege to the abbey, and later, to her family home. A very public day of mourning ended with a private ceremony when Diana was finally buried on an island in the heart of her family estate at Althorp.

Funeral Cortege of Princess Diana

What happened on Amelia Earhart's last flight?

Amelia Earhart was a woman with a great passion for flying. She was known as the 'queen of the air'. After becoming the first woman to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger in 1928, her next goal was to achieve a transatlantic crossing alone. She achieved this feat in 1932, and was the first woman to do so.

On June 1937, Amelia started her next trip to fly around the world with Fred Noonan as her navigator. No one knows why, but she left behind important communication and navigation instruments. The pair made it to New Guinea in 21 days. During the next leg of the trip, they departed from New Guinea for Howland Island, in the Pacific Ocean, and disappeared!

July 2nd, 1937, was the last time Earhart communicated. No one knows for sure what happened, but many people believe they got lost, and simply ran out of fuel, crashed, and died.

Amelia Earhart

Lincoln's Funeral Train

Abraham Lincoln's Last Journey

Abraham Lincoln's last journey was in the funeral train that carried his body. The train left Washington on the 21st of April 1865. Nearly 3200

Concorde

Why was the Concorde's last flight greeted with cheers and tears?

The Concorde was the fastest passenger plane ever built. It could carry 100 passengers in style across the Atlantic in just three and a half hours, flying at more than twice the speed of sound. However, British Airways decided to retire the famous aircraft after 27 years because it was no longer profitable. The fleet also never really recovered from the crash of Air France's Concorde aircraft outside Paris in July 2000.

On October 24th 2003, the Concorde made its final flight. Three flights landed at Heathrow airport within five minutes of each other, watched by thousands on Friday afternoon. The last transatlantic flight carried 100 celebrities from New York, cheers for a magnificent machine...and tears for the end of an era.

kilometres were traversed, and people lined the entire distance, almost without interval, standing with uncovered heads, mute with grief, as the funeral train swept by. Even night and falling showers did not keep the mourners away from honouring their beloved President on his last journey.

Amy Johnson

Amy Johnson was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia in 1930. On January 5th 1941, she took off alone in thick, freezing fog from Blackpool Air-

Amy Johnson

port, to deliver a plane. Four and a half hours later, her plane crashed into the Thames estuary. She was seen parachuting out of the plane, but her body was never recovered.

Challenger Disaster

Why did Challenger's last flight shock the world?

The Challenger space shuttle flew nine successful missions before its fatal last flight in January 28, 1986. From the beginning, though, the mission was plagued by problems. The Challenger finally lifted off at 11:38 am on 28th January. It quickly accelerated to more than twice the speed of sound, and reached a height of 16 kilometres, before exploding into a massive ball of flame and smoke. The flight had lasted just 73 seconds, and the entire crew of seven astronauts was killed.

The crew had included a school teacher, Sharon Christa McAuliffee. Her husband and children, along with the families of the other six astronauts, could only watch the explosion with horror and disbelief. It was a day of sorrow, as the world mourned seven heroes. An investigation concluded that the seal on the rocket booster had failed because of faulty design, the cold weather, and other factors. It was the first time the US had lost astronauts in flight, and it was a profound loss for the country.

Crew Members of the Challenger's Last Flight

Moving Tribute

In a moving tribute to the seven astronauts who had died in the Challenger explosion, the USSR, which was the main competitor to the USA of the race for supremacy in space, named seven asteroids after the seven crew members.

Which was the last aircraft to disappear in Bermuda Triangle?

Bermuda Triangle is an area of the western Atlantic Ocean between Florida, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico where a large number of ships and aircraft are said to have disappeared mysteriously. On 17th January, 1949, Star Ariel, an aircraft owned by British South American Airways was lost over the Atlantic Ocean. It was on a flight between Bermuda and Kingston, and is considered as the last flight to disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle.

The Last Jules Rimet Trophy

The Jules Rimet Trophy was awarded to the winners of the World Cup of Football from 1930 to 1970. Originally called 'Victory', the rolling trophy was renamed in 1946 after the FIFA president Jules Rimet. In 1970, The Brazilian team won the tournament for the third time. This third time victory allowed them to keep the real trophy . In 1966, the cup disappeared and was recovered by a little dog called Pickles. Finally, in 1983, it was stolen again and apparently melted down by the thieves.

Replica of Jules Rimet Trophy

Space Shuttle Atlantis

Which was the last space shuttle mission?

The space shuttle is a re-usable space craft. NASA's space shuttle fleet had its first space shuttle launch on April 21st 1981. The first space shuttle was Columbia, and it was followed by the Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour Space Shuttles. All of these set the highest standards of achievement in 30 years of missions.

The final space shuttle mission was STS-135. The shuttle Atlantis flew one last 12-day trip to the space station to deliver vital supplies. It ended on July 21st 2011, when Atlantis came to its home port at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

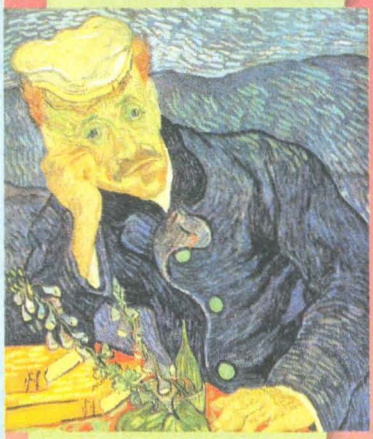
Why did the last train journey to Dhanushkodi shake the nation?

Dhanushkodi was a town at the southern tip of India. This historical coastal town in Tamil Nadu was once jostling with pilgrims, travellers, fishermen, and tourists. Dhanushkodi had a railway station and jetty on the coast, from where travellers were taken by ferries owned by Southern Railway, to Talaimannar in Sri Lanka. On December 24th, 1964, tragedy struck Dhanushkodi when giant waves, triggered by a cyclone, destroyed the entire town.

Those were times when communication was not as advanced as it is today. There was no TV, Internet, or other advanced communication networks. The Pamban Rail Bridge, which connects the mainland with Pamban across Palk Strait, was the only way to reach Dhanushkodi, besides water transport. On the night of December 22nd, train No.653, the Pamban-Dhanushkodi Passenger, was only few yards away from Dhanushkodi Railway station when it was hit by a massive tidal wave. The whole train was washed away, killing all the 110 passengers and 5 railway personnel on the spot. The railway station was swept away too. The cyclone shook not only Tamil Nadu, but the entire nation.

Destroyed Railway Station in Dhanushkodi

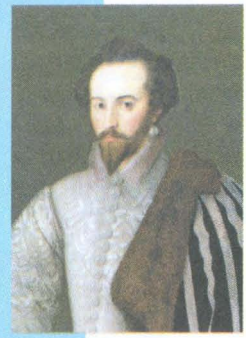
AMAZING



Record Sale

A Vincent Van Gogh painting, 'Portrait of Dr. Gachet' was auctioned on May 15th 1990 for $75,000,000, creating a world record. It depicts the doctor who took care of Van Gogh during the final months of his life.

● *Pallavi Ram*



Sir Walter Raleigh

Sir Walter Raleigh's Last Journey

Sir Walter Raleigh was a colourful personality of the Elizabethan Age in England. He organized expeditions to the new world, popularized tobacco, and found time to write poetry. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London several times. During the reign of James I, he was released to make his last expedition to South America. However, he broke the terms, and so, was sent to the Tower again. He was beheaded on 29th October 1618.

Which was the last steam locomotive in India?

Steam locomotives were once very common in India, but are now just tourist attractions on selected routes. The oldest steam locomotive, the Fairy Queen, served the East Indian Railway until 1909. In 1972, it was given heritage status by the Indian government. The Fairy Queen was revived in 1996, and began hauling a tourist train between Delhi and Alwar. The Antim Sitara or 'last star,' was the last steam locomotive built in India. It was commissioned in 1970. No one is quite sure as to what has hap-

Steam Engines

Romanian Stamp with Dog Laika(Left), Laika(Right)

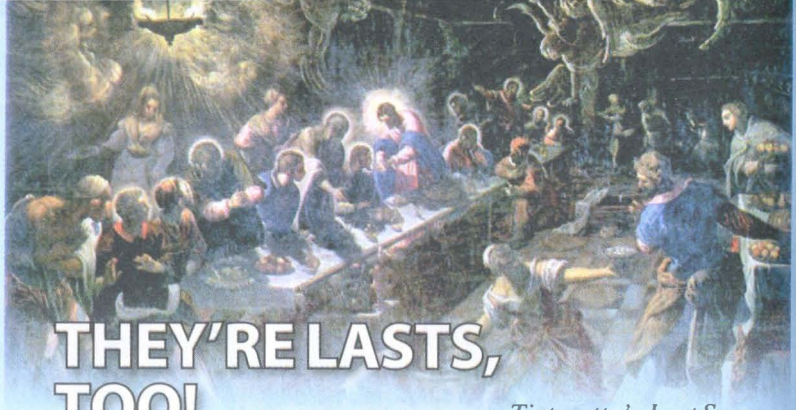
pened to it! The Deshbandhu Locomotive Park, at Ranchi, near the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, has a collection of steam exhibits, a small number of which are in running order, including the 'Fairy Princess', a locomotive built by the works in 1964.

Why is Laika's last journey remembered?

A dog Laika was the first living creature to orbit the Earth. Laika's mission on board Sputnik-2 by the USSR stunned the world. On November 3rd 1957, an astonished world witnessed the launch of Sputnik-2 with Laika on board.

The animal had been a stray wandering the streets of Moscow when she was captured for a space mission. After five to seven hours into the flight, no life signs were being received from Laika. By the fourth orbit, it was apparent that Laika had died from overheating, and the stress of her final dramatic journey.

Despite surviving for just a few hours, Laika's place in space history is assured, and the information she provided paved the way for human beings in space.



THEY'RE LASTS, TOO!

Tintoretto's Last Supper

Which are some famous last paintings?

Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto and Rembrandt are some of the greatest artists of all time. Raphael was a painter of the Italian 'High Renaissance'. The Transfiguration of Christ is the final work of Raphael's life. It is believed to have been unfinished, and was probably completed by one of his students.

Titian was the greatest painter of the Venetian

Wheatfield with Crows

Which is the last painting of Vincent Van Gogh?

Van Gogh was a Dutch artist who moved to Paris in 1886. In a short career that spanned nine years, he produced more than 700 drawings and 800 paintings. His work is notable for its rough beauty, emotional hon-

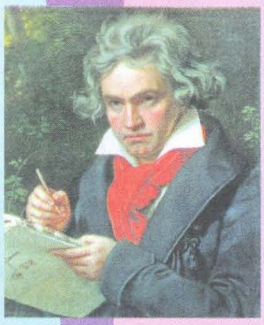
School, and one of the supreme figures of world art. His last painting 'La Pieta', was still left unfinished by the time of his death in 1576. Tintoretto was a painter of the Italian Renaissance, and his last painting 'The Last Supper,' is housed in the Basilica di San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.

'The Return of the Prodigal Son,' is the last work of Rembrandt, a Dutch master who lived in the Golden Age of Dutch Art.

esty, and bold colour. In 1885, he painted his first major work, 'The Potato Eaters'. Later, he moved to the South of France, and his work grew brighter in colour as he developed a unique and highly recognizable style.

What many believe was his last painting 'Wheatfield with Crows,' was painted in 1890. In July 1890, Van Gogh shot himself near the scene of his last painting.

Some art critics say that the painting 'Portrait of Dr. Gachet is his last painting.



Beethoven

Which is Beethoven's last symphony?

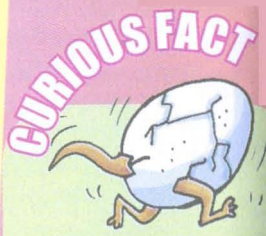
Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer and gifted pianist who revolutionized music. His father was an alcoholic, who was determined to make his son a famous musician, and punished him cruelly when he made mistakes.

He was eventually known as the greatest pianist of his time. Beethoven's most famous works are Symphonies 1 through 9, Moonlight Sonata, Fur Elise, Fidelio, and Missa Solemnis. Although Beethoven gradually lost his hearing, he continued composing. He composed many of the most famous musical works of all time after he had become totally deaf! He died in 1827, just three years after the premier of his last work, the Ninth Symphony.

Why was Mozart's last work very famous?

Mozart was a musical genius whocomposed his first work at the age of six! He became one of the greatest composers ever, and wrote 41 symphonies, as well as 22 operas, and 27 piano concertos. His greatest works were produced in the last years of his short life.

Mozart's last work was the Requiem Mass, which was left unfinished at the time of his death in 1791, when he was just 35. There was a bit of a mystery surrounding this work, as it was commissioned by a mysterious stranger, who later turned out to be an Austrian nobleman famous for claiming that the works of other composers were done by him! However, the Requiem Mass has always been credited to Mozart. Another mystery surrounding Mozart's death was the manner in which he died, with many people claiming that he had been poisoned. Whatever the cause of his death, his work remains immortal.



Amazing memory

Mozart was not just a musical genius- he had an amazing memory as well. When he was just 14 he heard a beautiful hymn sung at the Sistine Chapel. After hearing it just once, he was able to write down the entire score from memory, without missing a single note!

Mozart

Which was the Beatle's last album?

In the 1960's, a British group was responsible for shaking up the music world, and the talented quartet would become one of the most famous rock groups of all time. They were the Beatles. The group enjoyed tremendous success, and even starred in several movies till 1970, when they broke up due to personal differences. Their music was excellent, but the songs were even better. The words of the songs are as timely and meaningful today as they were then, when they seemed to sum up the feelings of an entire generation.

The last album that the Beatles recorded was 'Abbey Road,' in September 1969. However, the last album that was released was 'Let It Be', which was recorded in January 1969, but released only in 1970, along with a film of the same name. From 'Let it Be', the last song is 'Get Back'. 'Abbey Road' entered the British album charts at the no 1 position in October, and stayed there for a total of seventeen of its 81 weeks in the charts. In the US, it spent eleven weeks at the no 1 position.

The Beatles

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Superstition

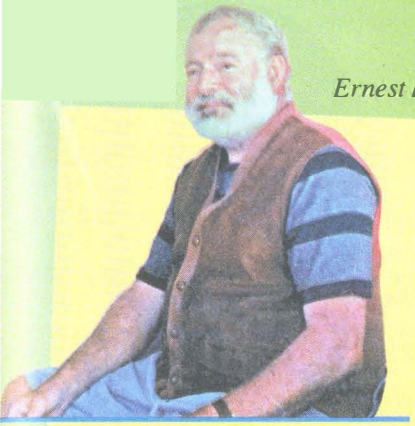
Beethoven, Schubert, and Bruckner are some famous composers who died after completing nine symphonies. This gave rise to the superstition that anyone who started a tenth symphony would die. Gustav Mahler, an Austrian composer, put off writing his tenth symphony because of this superstition, and when he finally did begin it, he died, and left it unfinished!

Why is Charles Dickens's last work still a mystery?

Charles Dickens is much loved for his great contribution to classic English literature. He wrote some of the most popular and widely read novels in the 19th century, from 'Oliver Twist,' to 'A Tale of Two Cities,' and 'Great Expectations'. As well as a huge list of novels he published an autobiography, edited weeklies, wrote travel books, and administered charitable organizations. He was also a theatre enthusiast, wrote plays, and performed before Queen Victoria in 1851.

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens's last work was 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood.' The story centred around two orphans- Edwin Drood and Rosa Bud, whose marriage had been fixed by their fathers before their deaths. However, Edwin disappears in mysterious circumstances when he breaks off the engagement. The story was left unfinished, for Dickens died before he completed it, and so what happened to Edwin Drood remains a mystery to this day!



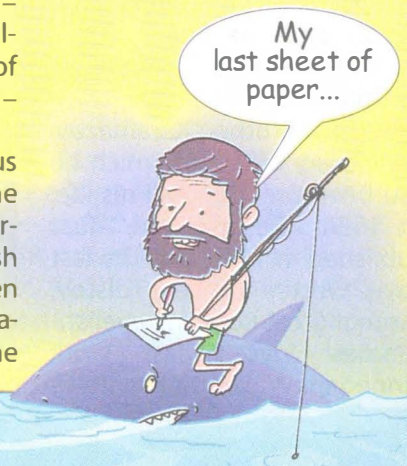
Ernest Hemingway

Which was Ernest Hemingway's last work?

Ernest Hemingway was undoubtedly one of the most influential of American writers. He was famous for his terse, direct style and his works reflect his own life and interests. Many of his works show man pitted against nature in his favourite sports – hunting, fishing, and bullfighting. In others he tells of the experiences of wartime – man against man.

One of his most famous works, 'The Old Man and the Sea', describes an old fisherman's fight to keep a giant fish he caught from being eaten by sharks. Another of his famous works is 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'. His novel, 'A Farewell to Arms', draws upon his wartime experience in Italy.

In fact, for much of his life, Hemingway lived the life he described in his novels. In the last years of his life, he was very depressed. On 2nd July 1961, he killed himself. His work, 'A Moveable Feast,' was not published during Hemingway's lifetime, but edited from his manuscripts and notes by his widow, and published in 1964. His last unfinished novel 'The Garden of Eden,' was published only in 1986, and became an immediate best seller.



Which are the last works of some famous authors?

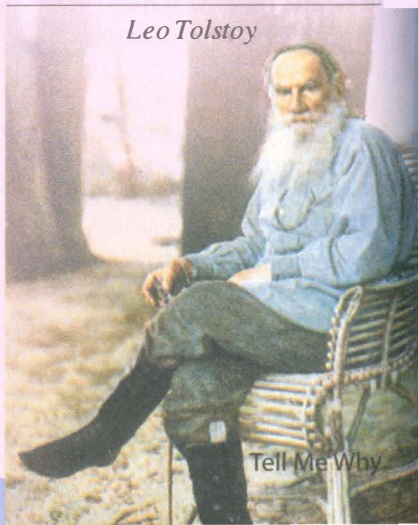
The last works of some famous authors are 'Castle Dangerous' by Sir Walter Scott, 'The Whites and the Blues' by Alexander Dumas, 'The Brothers Karamazov' by Fyodor Dostoevsky, 'Resurrection' by Leo Tolstoy, 'Finnegan's Wake' by James Joyce, and 'The Reivers,' by William Faulkner.

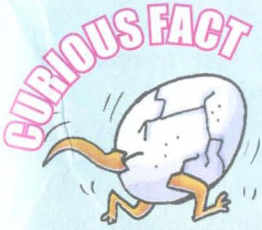
Sir Walter Scott, British poet and novelist, was the second most published novelist after Charles Dickens. His last work, 'Castle Dangerous' was published in 1832, the year of his death. The novels and plays of French author Alexandre Dumas are filled with swift action and clever talk, often set against a colourful historical background. His last work, 'The Whites and the Blues' was a drama in five acts. Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian writer, completed The Brothers Karamazov, the literary effort for which he had been preparing all his life, in 1880. 'Resurrection,' first published in 1899, was the last novel written by Leo Tolstoy, another great Russian novelist.

James Joyce's last work 'Finnegans Wake,' ranks among the most difficult works of fiction because of its complex language. It was first published in 1939, two years before Joyce, an Irish writer, died. 'The Reivers' was American author William Faulkner's last book. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1963, making Faulkner one of a select few to receive the prize twice.

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Leo Tolstoy





First and Last

'Gone with the Wind' by Margaret Mitchell is a magnificent novel that was both her first and last work. Another interesting fact is that she wrote the last chapter of the novel first!

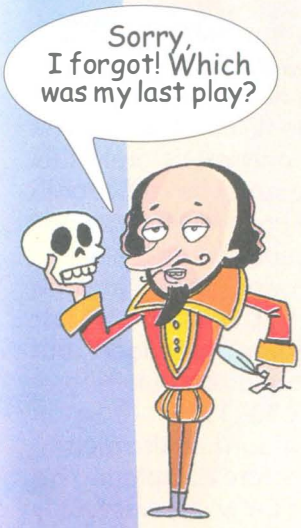
● *Sneha Rao*

Which was Shakespeare's last play?

William Shakespeare, who lived in the 17th century in England, is probably the world's most read, most performed, most filmed playwright. He wrote 37 plays, 154 famous sonnets, and many long poems. The plays of Shakespeare have been studied more than any other writing in the English language, and have been translated into numerous languages. He was equally good at comedies, tragedies and historical plays, and cleverly combined popular entertainment with elegant poetry.

William Shakespeare

He died in 1616, and there are several works which lay claim to being his last. 'The Tempest,' is widely considered to be the last surviving play written by William Shakespeare. It was performed in 1611. Shakespeare, however, did team up with another playwright called John Fletcher. In 1613, he wrote 'The Two Noble Kinsmen,' in collaboration with Fletcher. This play is sometimes considered to be Shakespeare's last work.

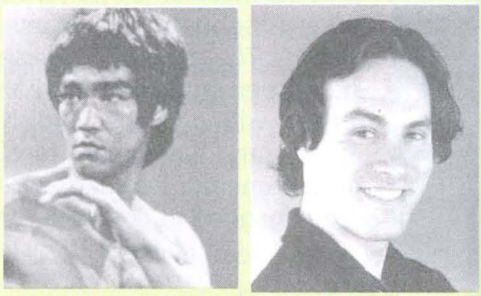


Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe was a brilliant playwright who lived during the same time as Shakespeare. Some people believe that Marlowe actually wrote the plays published by Shakespeare. According to them, Marlowe, who was a spy for Queen Elizabeth I, faked his own death to avoid his enemies, and lived in exile, writing the plays that he sold to Shakespeare!

Which were the last movies of Bruce Lee and Brandon Lee?

Bruce Lee remains the greatest icon of martial arts cinema, and a key figure of modern popular culture. The influence of Asian martial arts cinema today can be traced to this son of a Chinese immigrant in the USA. Though he studied philosophy, his first love was the martial art of Kung Fu, and he opened a



Bruce Lee and Brandon Lee

Kung Fu school. Bruce Lee's first movies were only moderately successful, but he struck box office gold with 'Fists of Fury' a low budget film shot in Thailand. Soon he had a huge fan following not only in Hong Kong but in the USA as well. His last movie was 'Enter The Dragon', but he died a month before its premiere, on July 20th 1973.

His son, Brandon Lee also died an early death before completing his last film, 'The Crow'. He was fatally

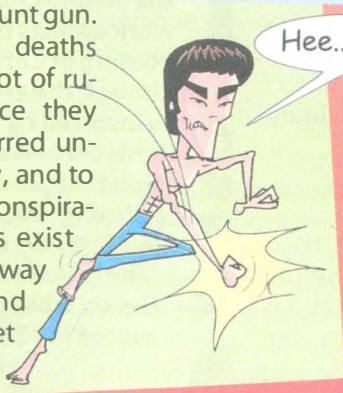
Alfred Hitchcock

Which was Alfred Hitchcock's last film?

Alfred Hitchcock was the acknowledged master of thriller movies. He began his film making career in 1919, illustrating title cards for silent films. His first completed film as director was The Pleasure Garden, in 1925. During his most inspired period, from 1950 to 1960, Hitchcock produced a cycle of memorable films that included horror movies, black comedies, and sophisticated thrillers. Alfred Hitchcock's three most famous films were Psycho, 'North by Northwest' and The Birds. These three masterpieces were made consecutively, near the end of Hitchcock's brilliant career. He made fifty-one other movies over a span of five decades.

His last film was 'Family Plot'. It was released in 1976, 51 years after he directed his first feature length motion picture. 'Family Plot' is a dark romantic comedy about two criminal couples. It features Hitchcock's usual sharp script, several interesting set pieces, and very appealing performances by some young talent.

shot by a stunt gun. Both the deaths created a lot of rumours since they both occurred unexpectedly, and to this day, conspiracy theories exist about the way father and son met their end.



The Grave Sites of Bruce Lee and Brandon Lee

DICTIONARY OF LASTS

- **Last Breath**
  The last moment of one's life; death.
- **Last but not Least**
  Last in order of mention or occurrence but just as important.
- **Last Ditch**
  Used to denote a final, often desperate, act to achieve something in the face of difficulty.
- **Last Judgment**
  The judgment of human kind expected in some religious traditions to take place at the end of the world.
- **Last Minute / Last Moment**
  The latest possible time before an event.
- **Last post**
  The bugle call giving notice of the hour of retiring at night, played also at military funerals and acts of remembrance.
- **Last Supper**
  The supper eaten by Jesus and his disciples on the night before the Crucifixion, as in the New Testament.

Last Judgement

Michelangelo was an Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor, architect, poet, and engineer who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art. His 'The Last Judgement,' covers the wall behind the altar in the Sistine Chapel. The work depicts the second coming of Christ, and, although the artist is clearly inspired by the Bible, it is his own imaginative vision that prevails in this painting. Michelangelo's last painting was 'The Crucifixion of St. Peter,' which he completed in 1550.

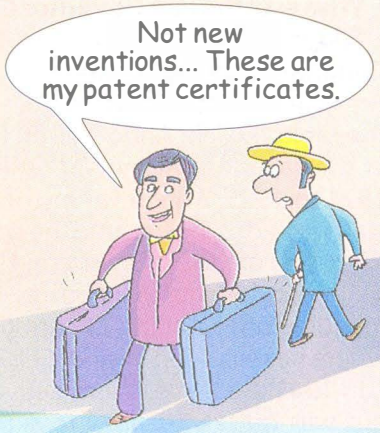
● *Ninu Dixit*

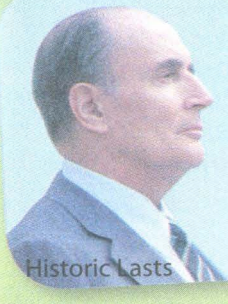
Which was Thomas Edison's last patent?

Thomas Alva Edison

Thomas Alva Edison is one of the greatest inventors in history, and was responsible for more inventions than any other inventor. He created the first research laboratory, which he called The Invention Factory, probably one of his greatest achievements. He had 1093 US patents to his name, as well as many other foreign patents.

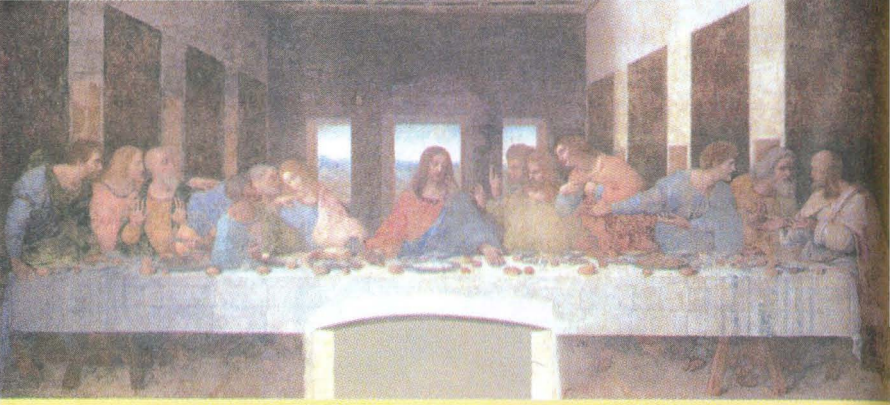
In 1878, Edison worked to discover a way of improving the electric light bulb invented earlier by Joseph Swan. By the end of 1880, he had developed a 16 watt bulb that lasted 1500 hours. He improved the telephone system that had been invented by Alexander Graham Bell, invented an early cinema projector, and his studio produced the first talking motion picture in 1912. The last patent to Thomas Edison was granted two years after his death in 1931. It was for a device called holder for article to be electroplated.





President Mitterrand's Last Supper

President Mitterrand of France knew that he was dying of cancer, and organized a last supper on December 31st 1995. Four delicacies that he loved were on the menu, including a tiny bird known as the ortolan that is highly prized by gourmets. It is said that President Mitterrand ate two of the birds at this final meal.



Last Supper of Jesus Christ- Painting by Leonardo Da Vinci

Who was the last Governor General of Taiwan?

Rikichi Ando was the last Governor General of Taiwan. He joined the Japanese Army in 1914, and quickly rose through the ranks. Rikichi Ando was an instructor at the Japanese Army War College from 1924 to 1925. After a variety of field and staff positions, he became the commanding officer of the 5th Division in 1938. Later that year, he was assigned as the commanding officer of the 21st Army in China, where he remained until 9th Feb 1940.

Rikichi Ando

In 1941, he retired from active service, but was quickly recalled to serve as the commander-in-chief of the Taiwan Army. From 1944 until the end of the war, he was the governor-general of Taiwan. On 25th Oct 1945, he represented Japan during the surrender ceremony in Taipei. He was arrested by the Chinese authorities, and charged with war crimes committed during his tenure in China. He committed suicide while in prison in Shanghai.

Last Supper of Jesus Christ

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ ate his last meal with his disciples, before his crucifixion. The day on which Christians remember the Last Supper is also known as Maundy Thursday. All his twelve disciples were present, including Judas, who was later to betray him to the Romans.

At the supper, Jesus poured water into a bowl, and then knelt in front of each of the twelve disciples, washing their feet, and drying them with his towel. He blessed the bread and the wine, and gave it to his disciples. He said 'One of you sitting here will betray me'. His words came true. He was betrayed by his apostle, Judas Iscariot.

● *Arvind Bhat*

Who was the last Nizam of Hyderabad?

Mir Osman Ali Khan was the seventh, and the last Nizam or ruler of Hyderabad. He ruled for 37 years from 1911 - 1948. He was one of the richest men in the world.

The Nizam's rule saw the growth of Hyderabad economically and culturally. Electricity, railways, roads and airways developed. Nearly all the public buildings currently in Hyderabad, such as the Osmania General Hospital, High Court, Central State Library, Assembly Hall, Jubilee Hall were built during Osman Ali Khan's reign.

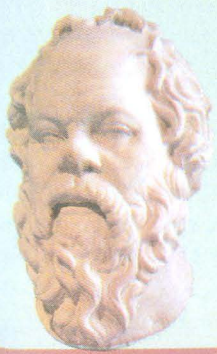
When India gained independence in 1947, the princely state of Hyderabad did not accede either to India or Pakistan. Indian Forces invaded the state in September 1948, after the negotiations failed. After five days of fighting, the Nizam agreed to accede to the Indian Union on 17th September 1948.

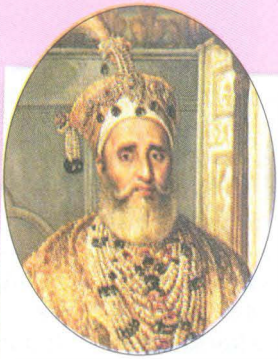
Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam, died on Friday 24th February 1967.

Mir Osman Ali Khan

End of a Great Teacher

Socrates was a famous teacher in Ancient Athens. He wanted his students to question things. This angered some of the wealthy nobles in ancient Athens, and they demanded he be tried for mocking the Gods. Socrates thought that it was ridiculous and refused to defend himself. The jury found him guilty, and rather than be killed, he drank poison and killed himself.



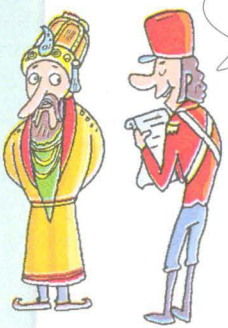


Bahadur Shah Zafar

Who was the last Mughal Emperor?

The last Mughal king, Bahadur Shah, better known as Bahadur Shah Zafar, came to the throne in 1837 when he was 60 years of age. He was last in the lineage of Mughal emperors who ruled over India for about 300 years. Bahadur Shah Zafar, like his predecessors, was a weak ruler who came to the throne when the British domination over India was strengthening and the Mughal rule was nearing its end. When he became king, Mughal rule was confined to the Red Fort.

It was at the time of Bahadur Shah that the War of Independence in 1857 started. Bahadur Shah Zafar was nominated as Commander-in-Chief. The British won the war, and Bahadur Shah was overthrown. He was exiled to Burma, and died in 1862.



Unlucky 13

The number 13 is generally considered to be unlucky. One reason given is that there were 13 people present at Christ's last supper. It was after this supper that both Christ and Judas were killed. According to Norse mythology, Loki the God of Mischief, went uninvited to a banquet as the 13th guest, and one of the other gods was killed immediately afterwards.

Loki as Depicted in an 18th Century Manuscript

Who was the last ruler of a nation to be hanged?

Saddam Hussein ruled the Republic of Iraq with a tight grip from the 1970's onwards. He effectively brought the country into the modern age. His many critics, however, claimed that Saddam was a ruthless dictator who would stop at nothing in his endless push for power.

Saddam Hussein was in control of his country during countless military conflicts, including an eight-year war against Iran in the 1980's, and the Persian Gulf War in 1991. In March of 2003, US led forces invaded Iraq, claiming that Saddam was supporting terrorist attacks, and concealing nuclear weapons. Saddam escaped capture, but after a nine-month manhunt, he was caught, and faced multiple charges relating to war crimes and human rights abuses. He was found guilty of crimes against humanity, and sentenced to death by hanging. On December 30th 2006, he became the last ruler to be executed by hanging.

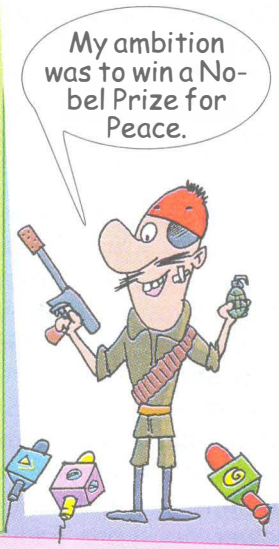
Saddam Hussein

Dynamite

Did you know that dynamite, Nobel's invention, was originally called 'Nobel's safety powder?' Later, he registered his invention under the name 'dynamite' from the Greek word 'dynamis,' meaning power.

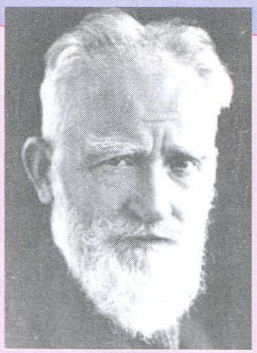
Why will Alfred Nobel's last will and testament be remembered?

Alfred Nobel's invention of dynamite in 1867 established his fame worldwide, and he built more than ninety factories that manufactured explosives and ammunition. In his last will and testament of 1895, Nobel created a fund for the awarding of five annual prizes 'to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind'. Each year, on December 10th the Nobel Prize is handed out in five categories-physics,



What is interesting about George Bernard Shaw's last will and testament?

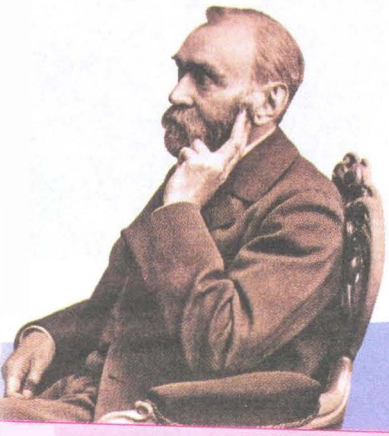
George Bernard Shaw was an Irish dramatist, literary critic, a socialist spokesman, and a leading figure in the 20th century theatre. He was a freethinker, defender of women's rights, and advocate of equality of income. In 1925, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Shaw accepted the honour, but refused the money.



George Bernard Shaw

chemistry, medicine, literature and peace. The awards are given to those who have made the most important discoveries or inventions in their field. In 1969, a sixth award in economics, in memory of Alfred Nobel was added.

Alfred Nobel



A man of many causes, Shaw supported the abolition of private property, radical change in the voting system, campaigned for the simplification of spelling, and the reform of the English alphabet. In fact, he proved his great love for language when he left money in his last will and testament to fund the development of a phonetic alphabet.

Who was the last Viceroy of India?

Lord Louis Mountbatten was the last Viceroy, and first Governor General of India. He was the great grandson of Queen Victoria, and served in the Royal Navy in World War I. He achieved the defeat of the Japanese offensive towards India, and the conquest of Burma.

In February of 1947, the British government announced that India would be granted independence by June 1948. Lord Mountbatten became Viceroy of India in March 1947. He was in charge of overseeing the British withdrawal from India. British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan, and became independent nations on August 15th 1947. Mountbatten remained as Governor General of India until June 1948. In 1979, he was killed by a terrorist bomb.

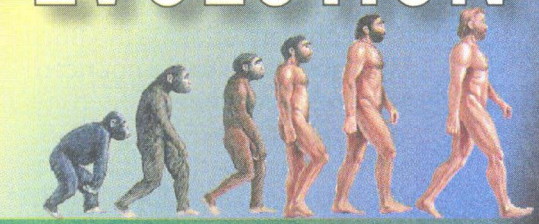
Mountbatten

MANORAMA

TELL ME WHY

Next issue

EVOLUTION



Mahatma Gandhi and C.Rajagopalachari

Who was the last Governor General of India?

C. Rajagopalachari, or Rajaji as he was known, was the second, and last Governor General of India, and the only Indian to hold this post. He was a very well-known lawyer, writer, and statesman of India during the independence struggle.

After Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa in 1914, Rajaji made up his mind to follow him. Rajaji was appointed the General Secretary of the Congress in 1921. Rajaji was among the five most important leaders in the Indian National

Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie was a famous English writer of detective novels. Two of her books were published after her death, according to her last bequest. The first was 'Curtain', a Hercules Poirot case, and the second was, 'Sleeping Murder,' which was the last case of Miss Marple.

● *Praveen Agarwal*

Congress. He became a member of the Interim Government formed in 1946. When India gained Independence, Rajaji became the Governor of West Bengal. In 1948, he became the first India Governor General, and continued in this post until the Republic was declared in 1950. The post of Governor General was then replaced by that of President, and Rajendra Prasad became the first President of India.

Which is the last UN member state?

South Sudan became the world's newest country when it gained independence from Sudan on 9th July 2011. South and North Sudan battled two civil wars over more than five decades, culminating in a 2005 peace deal that led to South Sudan's independence. South

A Village in South Sudan

Sudan was admitted as a member state of the United Nations on July 14th 2011, and is the last country to join the United Nation to date. While the new country is oil-rich, it is one of the poorest and least-developed. There are more than 8 million citizens and the new government faces many challenges.

FOR MORE LASTS TO COME

A Space to Keep Updates.....

The story of lasts definitely doesn't end here. More things, living and non - living are sure to disappear even as we look on. This means that, the lists of lasts needs constant updating. This blank space is for you to record new things that may be added to this list. Keep your eyes and ears open....

I Wonder Why?

The question of the month

Aren't there many little things you have wondered about, but didn't know whom to ask? Send us your questions, and we will give you the fascinating reasons behind the incredible mysteries of life.

Why does an apple turn brown on being cut?

Apples, and other fruits like pears, bananas, peaches, potatoes, contain an enzyme (called polyphenol oxidase or tyrosinase) that reacts with oxygen, and iron-containing phenols that are also found in the apple.

The oxidation reaction basically forms a sort of rust on the surface of the fruit. You see the browning when the fruit is cut or bruised, because these actions damage the cells in the fruit, allowing oxygen in the air to react with the enzyme and other chemicals.

All cells contain thousands of enzymes. These enzymes do all of the work necessary for the cell to live its life. Once you cut the fruit, you open up some of the cells. The enzyme then has access to oxygen in the air and it does its thing, turning the fruit brown. This is the same thing that causes brown spots in apples when you drop them.

It is believed that this reaction, called enzymatic browning, is a form of plant defence against pests and pathogens.

● *K.P. Sukumar*

MANORAMA TELL ME WHY - HISTORIC LASTS

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